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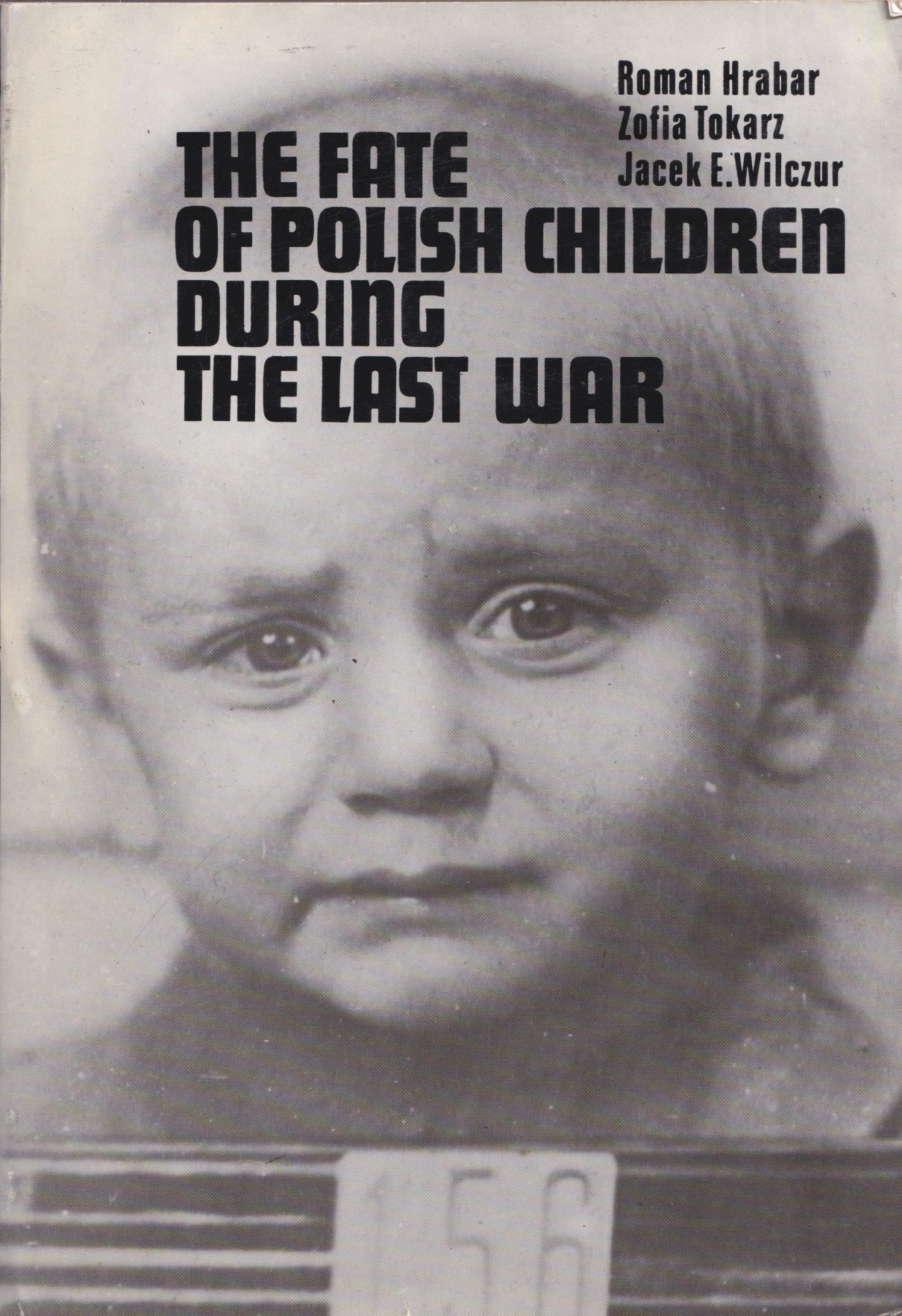
THE FATE OF POLISH CHILDREN DURING THE LAST WAR



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THE FATE OF POLISH CHILDREN DURING THE LAST WAR

The Council
for the Protection
of Monuments
to Struggle
and Martyrdom

Roman Hrabar,
Zofia Tokarz and
Jacek E. Wilczur

THE FATE OF POLISH CHILDREN DURING THE LAST WAR

Interpress
Warsaw 1981

Post-war editorial output as a whole includes a large number of books dealing with children, but in an unusual context.

These are books about the fate of Polish children and young people during the Second World War.

They are moving and horrifying books which often provoke fear and dismay and they show the real tragedy which had no precedent in the history of mankind.

Since the beginning of history, children have been the most precious wealth of each nation, its hope and future.

During the many wars, even the barbarian ones, children were always spared and protected in compliance with the unwritten laws of morality.

The crime against children perpetrated by Nazism is the darkest blot on the conscience of mankind.

Fascism spared no one.

With cruelty and ruthlessness it directed the brunt of its genocidal activity against the youngest generations of Poles.

Children and young people shared the fate of their elders, with them they fought and perished.

They were killed during the pacification operations in the Zamość, Kielce and Lublin region, they perished in gas chambers and crematoria in Nazi extermination camps.

They starved and froze to death during deportations and transports; they were forcefully taken away from their dear ones, from their mothers and fathers, and carried to the Third Reich to be de-nationalized.

Of the over six million Polish citizens who perished between 1939 and 1945, more than one third — or two million and two hundred thousand — were children and young people under age.

Such was the fate of Polish children in those terrible times, the fate of the young generation of a nation which Nazism condemned to biological extermination.

This book is devoted to those youngest victims of the Second World War.

When Poland regained independence and work started on the reconstruction of the devastated country, one whole generation was missing. There were missing those who were to be the nation's future, who were to give their talent and their ardent hearts and minds to their liberated country.

We Poles shall never forget this cruel lesson of history.

And we shall do everything in our power to keep the memory of those events ever alive, to transmit it from generation into generation so as it is ever present in the national consciousness.

We shall do this not in order to provoke feelings of hatred towards any nation or state but so that the memory of those years of terror become a warning for the present and future generations.

The conclusions resulting from the history of the Polish nation, from those painful and difficult years, lead us to surround with particular care and protection the youngest generations.

This is one of the principles of Poland's home and international policy and we have done much in this field.

We have provided the best possible conditions for the overall development of the youngest Poles.

At the same time, we are conducting large-scale activity in the international arena.

Poland has been a co-author of a historic document — the declaration of children's rights adopted by the United Nations — which is a special kind of human rights charter.

The Polish draft of the declaration on the preparation of societies for life in peace has been recognized by the nations of the world.

Another expression of Polish activity for peace is the construction in Poland of a Memorial Hospital, the Child Health Centre, which is a unique monument to thirteen million children, victims of the Second World War.

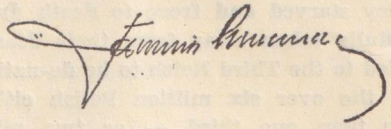
The Memorial Hospital, which was handed over for use in 1979, in the International Year of the Child, is a reminder that a "child's happiness is the supreme right" and that "children should be given the best of everything".

When we think about the future, when we fight for the supreme good that is peace, we cannot dismiss the past from our memories.

Always and on every occasion we warn the world against the danger of new armed conflicts.

This book is both a reminder of and a warning against what war and fascism mean for mankind. It is a warning to those who will decide the world's future, to children and young people.

Chairman
of the Council for the Protection
of Monuments of Struggle and Martyrdom



(Janusz Wieczorek)

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Introduction

"A crime can never be called dead, no matter when it was perpetrated, a thousand years ago or early this morning," the great Polish novelist Stefan Żeromski wrote in 1924 in a small prose work entitled Międzymorze *in which he drew the attention of the Polish public to the German questions.*

It can never be called dead, that means it will never be forgotten. The Polish nation had many reasons then to revert to the past. It has them today, too, when it recalls the relatively recent events of the Second World War — a period when Nazi crimes committed against Poland surpassed any other crimes in Polish history, a history going back over a thousand years.

Gdańsk, decorated with Nazi flags in August 1939, and the alleged courtesy visit of the battleship Schleswig-Holstein, which was moored in the vicinity of the Polish Military Depot in Westerplatte, aiming its guns at it, were a prologue to German hostilities in Poland. But before the first shots were fired, the Nazis had imprisoned, and later sent to concentration camps, the staff and the students of the Polish secondary school in Kwidzyn, a town known for its struggle for the preservation of its Polish character. The police and Gestapo officers surrounded the school building and arrested pupils and teachers, for whom buses were already waiting. "In the back and beside the driver, armed Nazis were standing or sitting", was how Dr Władysław Gębik, the headmaster, recalled those moments of horror. "They were wearing red arm-bands with swastikas, their guns ready to shoot. At whom? At defenceless schoolchildren and the master accompanying them".

All of them were taken to a former mental institution at Tapiau near Królewiec which had been closed two years earlier. When the children were being led to the building, a civilian and several armed guards appeared to check who had been brought there.

A conversation followed between the civilian and the youngsters.

"He shook his head and, after a moment, asked one of the Kwidzyn boys: 'Wie alt bist du?'

'Eleven,' the boy answered.

'And you?'

'Ten'

'And you?'

'Twelve.'

'Unmöglich,' the fat man murmered and swore."

Even the Nazi was astonished, for he had been informed that he was to guard dangerous political criminals.

Five days later the Germans invaded Poland, along her entire frontier. The invasion had not, of course, been preceded by a declaration of war. The Nazis wanted to take the Polish infantry divisions and cavalry brigades by surprise. The German troops dealt death to the population, sparing nobody in accordance with the directives of the Chancellor and Führer of the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler. Among the victims were old people, women and children.

As early as September 1, 1939, at Wyszanów near Ostrzeszów Wielkopolski, German soldiers drove all inhabitants out of their homesteads and set the buildings on fire. Those who would not obey the orders were shot. The cellar of the local manor provided shelter for terrified women with children and elderly people. Wehrmacht personnel, deaf to their laments, hurled grenades into the cellar. Fourteen persons were killed, including the Fiołka, Stasiak, Szyszko, Woś and Wróbel families. Henryk Fiołka, the youngest of the murdered children, was only two years old. Hipolit Stasiak was 80.

Such acts were by no means an exception. In the night of September 1—2, in the neighbouring village of Torzeniec, the Nazis also set the buildings on fire and shot at the escaping peasants. Among those killed was Bronisława Pietrzak with two-year-old Helenka in her arms. In Great Poland, Pomerania and Silesia and also in the Łódź and Częstochowa regions, the guns of the firing squads never fell silent. A group of heroic boy and girl scouts, defenders of Katowice, were put to death. At Imielin near Tychy, in the course of fighting, the uniformed murderers killed 28 local inhabitants. One of those murdered, Roman Czamberg, was five years old.

Soldiers of the Wehrmacht shot at the defenceless population. They were effectively assisted by the military police and the special police formations which followed in the wake of the advancing frontline units. Members of the Selbstschutz, until recently Polish citizanes of German descent, maltreated those whom they knew well as their neighbours. Often they would send them to death. Boy and girl scouts as well as members of other youth organizations were subjected to reprisals. Elementary and secondary school pupils were executed by the Einsatzgruppen. *The territories incorporated into the Third Reich in 1939 were running with Polish blood.*

In the western and northern territories of the former Polish state, Polish schools were replaced by four-grade German schools which were

to provide only the simplest elementary knowledge. The teaching of subjects important from the national point of view was forbidden. "Simple counting, up to 500 at most, and the writing of one's name is sufficient... I do not deem teaching them to read necessary," ran Himmler's instruction of May 1940. For the German policy toward conquered Poland was strictly defined; it was regulated by numerous decrees of the Nazi authorities.

The Jews, described in Nazi nomenclature as an "alien element", were moved into ghettoes, or districts of towns and localities set aside for them. The ghettoes were only a transitional stage in the campaign of total extermination of the Jewish people, who were later sent on to concentration camps. In August 1942, several months before the heroic insurrection of the Warsaw Jews that had preceded the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, Dr Janusz Korczak, together with the children from his orphanage, was murdered in the extermination camp Treblinka II.

The Nazis acted ruthlessly. On April 11, 1940, in the village of Skłoby, which was suspected of aiding the partisans of Major Henryk Dobrzański known as "Hubal", they shot 215 men, including juveniles. Such acts were committed wherever the Germans "pacified" villages, which they did without sparing the defenceless, or taking notice of the fact that they were murdering children.

On November 27, 1942, the Nazis launched a campaign to colonize the Zamość region by German settlers. Within a few months 116 villages were resettled. Thirty-three thousand children aged two to 12 were imprisoned in a transit camp in Zamość, where a special commission classified them into groups. Those who had been recognized as "racially worthless" were sent to concentration camps to be exterminated. The young Auschwitz prisoners were treated as severely as the adults. Over 600 children were directed to the gas chambers immediately after the selection. These were children less than 120 cm tall. Passing under a bar placed at this height, they desperately attempted to stretch themselves, so as to avoid the fate that the Nazis were preparing for them.

A shocking account is given by Maria Zarębińska-Broniewska, a former Auschwitz inmate, author of the book Tales of Oświęcim, *who was arrested by the Gestapo for underground activity. Confinement in the camp contributed to her premature death two years after the liberation. However, she had enough time to write down her recollections, and thus to bear witness to "the age of contempt".*

In the concentration camp she witnessed the tragedy of Polish, Jewish, Gypsy, Slovak, Russian and other children. She often saw them bustle about in the so-called Familienlager; *she herself had left a little daughter in Warsaw. The prisoners still believed that the little ones would survive all selections and murders. But the reality was to be different.*

"At five in the afternoon the children had a dinner of porridge with sugar, and several hours later they were taken to the crematorium," writes Zarębińska-Broniswska. *"All crematoria were in operation, but it turned out that the number of ovens was insufficient. Therefore, giant pits were ordered to be dug, and there children were burnt to death. I saw hundreds of children get out of trains and go to their death. Now that I am writing this, I am surprised that I did not go mad, being myself a mother who loves not only her own child, but all children."*

At that time, the head doctor of the camp who sent those children to their death was Dr Josef Mengele. After the war he escaped to South America and has been hiding ever since.

Michał Rusinek, a former inmate of Nazi concentration camps and a prominent Polish writer, secretary of the Polish PEN-Club of long standing, describes his contact with children in Ebensee in his From the Barricades to the Valley of Starvation. *Young Auschwitz prisoners evacuated as a result of the Red Army offensive were marching in fives, wearing lengthy striped clothes, in overcoats wetted by snow, with over a hundred kilometres of road behind them.*

"When these children stand in the Appellplatz, small, reaching upto the SS-men's knees, the Arbeitsdienstführer *asks them:*

'Who are you, Jude?'

'No, not Jude.'

Poles?'

'Yes, Poles.'

Even this German, familiar with every cruelty, is surprised.

'Why are you in the camp?'

'From the uprising.'

'Oh, I see.'

'I see' says more than any unnecessary threats. This murmur establishing the cause of imprisonment is sufficient."

And writing about the fate of those Warsaw boys sent to concentration camps, Rusinek adds:

"Tomorrow they will go to peel potatoes, and within less than three months they will be sent in the first group of the sick to the gas chambers in Mauthausen."

Nothing can be added to these accounts which are enough to accuse the Nazis. As early as August 1939, Hitler, addressing high-ranking officers assembled in his headquarters, said:

"Our strength depends on our rapidity and brutality. Genghis Khan caused the death of millions of women and children by a decision of his will and in serenity, and history sees in him only the great founder of a state... I sent my Totenkopfstandarte *to the East and ordered them to kill without mercy all men, women and children of the Polish race*

and language. Only in this way shall we win the territory which we need so badly."

The programme was as clear as it was cynical; it left no doubts whatsoever. The Nazi occupation meant death to millions of Poles, among them children. The occupied territories became a giant extermination camp. The children were deprived of all attributes of youth: joy of life and a sense of security.

The following book by Roman Hrabar, Zofia Tokarz and Jacek E. Wilczur is one more account documenting the experiences of the Polish nation in the years 1939-45. Its subject is the martyrdom of Polish children, a martyrdom without any precedent for never in the history of our civilization has so cruel a programme of extermination been devised and carried into practice.

LESŁAW M. BARTELSKI

1

The Nazi Concepts and Programmes for the Extermination of Children

Plans for the biological extermination of the Polish nation, the first victim of Nazi Germany's military aggression, were drawn up long before the outbreak of the Second World War.

These plans were spawned by the NSDAP Racial Political Office where political, racialist, and historical theses were formulated and developed on the basis of "scientific premises". The problem of the Polish state was treated in categories of "racial policy" and "nationality policy" [1]. It was contended that Poland owed its territorial and political organization to the remnants of East Teutons and Norman lords who had invaded these areas and formed the estate of the nobility. The substantial admixture of Teutonic blood was reinforced by a new inflow of German blood in later times. The Polish nation "cannot be treated as homogeneous in political and ideological terms." [2] This was allegedly proved by provincial antagonisms. It was assumed that in western Poland there was a substantial preponderance of German blood and that the population of Upper Silesia was largely German and had been Polonized.

These theses and views formed the foundation and the starting-point for an apocalyptic programme, developed in many long-term and short-term plans, which provided for the eviction, extermination, enslavement, and Germanization of tens of millions of people in East European countries. Turned into a socio-technical instrument, these theses and views were to incite contempt, and hate, to justify terror and to create living conditions that would lead to a total or partial physical extermination of persons of Polish nationality.

The text of the widely known document referred to as the *General-plan Ost* of the *Reichsführer SS* was apparently destroyed or hidden in time, for no copy of it has been preserved. This was a strictly secret document and it was known exclusively to the most trusted members of the higher Nazi hierarchy. The preparatory work connected with the plan was carried out on instructions from Heinrich Himmler before the outbreak of the war. This fact was confirmed by *SS Obergruppenführer* Erich von dem Bach, the notorious war criminal, who testified as a witness before the First American Military Tribunal in Nurem-

1939
Annihilation Act One

Peasants trying to escape from the oncoming German troops

After a German air-raid

Children helping to dig anti-aircraft shelters in Warsaw

Victims of Nazi barbarity

Rubble that was once a home

At the grave of a soldier killed in the September 1939 campaign

berg in Case VIII against the Race and Settlement Head Office (RuSHA). The exact reproduction of the terms of this document became possible both thanks to the testimony in this trial by *SS Standartenführer* Dr Hans Ehlich, a senior official of the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA) — Dr Ehlich was the chief author of the plan — and on the basis of a memorial of April 27, 1942, headed "An Estimation of and Comments on the *Generalplan Ost* of the *Reichsführer SS*". The second document was drawn up by Dr Erich Wetzel, head of the Advisory Board of the NSDAP Racial Political Office. The final wording of the *Generalplan Ost* was worked out in 1940 — as Dr Hans Ehlich testified — and it was preceded by a number of special studies conducted by various scientific institutions over several years.[3]

The *Generalplan Ost* was not an isolated phenomenon, the effect of a concept conceived on the spur of the moment. German imperialism, which was born in connection with Germany's rapid economic development in the 19th century, assimilated the slogan of *Drang nach Osten* (Thrust to the East) as its basic dogma in foreign policy. Nazism represented the high point of this dogma to which it contributed geopolitical and racist theories and the myth of the German nation's historical mission to rule over the whole of Europe and in future also over the entire world. The *Generalplan Ost*, whose guidelines were mapped out by Hitler, was a consequence and an expression of these views — which were now given a political direction. Long before the outbreak of the Second World War Hitler said:

> The French complained after the war that there were 20 million Germans too many. We accept this criticism. We are in favour of planned control of the population but our friends will forgive us if we deduct these twenty million elsewhere...
>
> One of the main tasks of the German leadership for all times will be to impede by any means in our power the further development of the Slav races. A natural instinct enjoins all living beings not only to defeat their enemies but also to destroy them[4].

The ideological dogmas about race and "living space" (*Lebensraum*) deepened and developed, and after Nazi Germany's aggression against Poland the number of 20 million Slavs to be eliminated became the starting-point to further, ruthless plans. The slogan about the need to ensure living space had nothing in common with the economic needs of the German nation; it became the slogan for an unexampled imperialist expansion. This ideological climate gave rise to new, fantastic plans, such as the *Generalplan Ost*. Dr Erich Wetzel, the author of the memorial of April 27, 1942, speaking of the enormous problems connected with the implementation of the plan, warned in his final conclusions:

> The rejection [of these plans — ed. note] as impossible to realize or fantastic might turn out be very dangerous. Future German eastern policy will show

whether we intend to provide the Third Reich with lasting and secure foundations. If the Third Reich is to be a millennial state, planning should also be measured in generations. In future German policy thinking in racial-biological terms will have to be of decisive importance because only then will it be possible to ensure the future of the German nation.[5]

The *Generalplan Ost* was in fact a great "racial-political idea".

It was composed of two basic parts of which the first, described as the "Small Plan" (*Kleine Planung*), contained projects for the near future. They were to be implemented gradually as territories situated to the east of the German frontier were conquered. The second part contained long-term plans. Defined as the "Big Plan" (*Grosse Planung*) it comprised projects whose realization was to begin after a victorious end of the war and was planned for a period of 25 to 30 years. Vast areas of Eastern Europe, to be gradually incorporated into the Greater Reich, were to include lands stretching approximately to a line running from north to south and linking Lake Ladoga with the Black Sea near the Crimean straits. Thus future Germany would have absorbed Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic countries except Finland and an enormous part of the Soviet Union. It was also planned to expel 31 million people, and in a later version of this plan, contained in Erich Wetzel's memorial, 46 to 51 million people.

The authors of the plans worried about the "extraordinary biological reproductvie strength of the neighbouring peoples in the East" with respect to which they deemed it justified in the future to conduct a "deliberately negative population policy" with the application of all possible means, including sterilization.[6]

It was intended to leave 14 million people of other than German nationality in the Greater Reich and to settle some 10 million Germans there. The memorial of April 27, 1942, was critical of these two figures, and suggested that only after detailed investigations of the population were carried out in the East would it be possible to establish the number of persons who might be Germanized or who were "racially undesirable".

At the time when the NSDAP Racial Political Office came out with its review and criticism (and in fact with a new version of the *Generalplan Ost*) ist first part, the "Small Plan", was already being implemented.

Particular attention was paid to Polish affairs. The number of Poles was estimated at 20 to 24 million and they were considered to be a nation that was the most hostile to the Germans, numerically the strongest and, therefore, "the most dangerous of all aliens" due to be expelled from their land. The Poles were also supposed to be most prone to conspire. From the racial point of view the authors of the plan credited the Poles with similar elements as the German nation, although they

also had an admixture of East European, East Baltic and Mediterranean blood.

As the *Generalplan Ost* provided for the expulsion of 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the Poles, that is 16 to 20.4 million, 3 to 4.6 million Poles would have remained in the German settlement area. The new version was based on the assumption that the over rigorous racial criteria adopted by the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom would be mitigated, not only in view of the "good racial qualities" of a substantial part of the Polish population but principally because of the need to supply the Third Reich and the settlement areas with a labour force. It was planned to resettle 20 million Poles in Western Siberia, and "the most dangerous" were to be sent to South America, particularly Brazil.

The authorities of the Third Reich deemed it necessary to implement the "Small Plan" while the war was still going on. At the very outset of the occupation mass expulsions were carried out, and concentration and labour camps set up.

The assumptions of the "Small Plan" which contained general recommendations were next elaborated in more detailed documents. The most important of them was the memorial of November 25, 1939, composed on instructions from the NSDAP Racial Political Office by Dr Erich Wetzel and Dr Gerhard Hecht. The memorial made an analysis of the population of Poland and put forward the theses on which legal acts defining German nationality were based. It covers 36 typescript pages and is composed of three parts. The first part contains a review of Poland's national and racial structure and a description of its terriotory in demographic terms. The second part covers the treatment of the population in the incorporated lands, including the problem of settlement and resettlement. The third part is devoted to the treatment of Poles and Jews in the "remaining part of Poland".

The memorial estimated the Polish population at some 17 million, with Kashubians, Mazurians, Łemkis and highlanders — as "other Slav minorities" — not being included in this number. Mention is also made of the following national minorities: three million Ukrainians, four million Byelorussians, more than three million Jews, persons of Judaic faith, and one million converted Jews, a small number of Slovaks, Czechs, Lithuanians and Latvians. The German minority which was dispersed over the whole territory (in old Prussian and Austro-Silesian parts, in central Poland and in Galicia, in compact groups of peasants and artisans) was estimated at 1.2 to 1.5 million. The number of Kashubians was estimated at 200,000 to 300,000, that of Silesians, Pomeranians, Warmians, Lubuszans and others at 1 to 1.5 million.

The number of Mazurians and highlanders was not given. On the basis of statistical data compiled by the governor's office in Poznań,

the memorial stated that the lands incorporated into the Reich were inhabited by 7,918,377 Poles, 507,764 Germans, 494,813 Jews and 171,001 persons of other nationalities. The Poles represented 86 per cent, the Germans seven per cent, and the Jews five per cent of the total population. The memorial postulated "an absolute reduction of the number of Poles and the expulsion of all Jews and Polish-Jewish half-breeds". The Nazis feared that if the Poles were not expelled in a "ruthless" way, the polisch population would continue to increase more or less in the same proportion (30 to 32 births per 1,000 inhabitants).

Part II of the memorial defined who in this complex situation might be treated as a German, who as a Pole and how the Polish-German "intermediate strata" could be estimated. These were to include persons who were partly of German descent or lived in nationally mixed marriages with Poles but did not satisfy the conditions for being entered in the German national list *(Deutsche Volksliste)*. It was intended to create a "special group" of these intermediate strata and to strive to Germanize it wholly in the territory of the Third Reich, provided, of course, its members were not "decided Polish nationals".

The memorial stressed that Hitler's deceree of October 8, 1939, on the structure and the administration of the eastern lands, sanctioned regulations on the right to Reich citizenship and nationality, creating yet another legal concept: revocable nationality. In this connection there was drawn up a discriminatory list which comprised the following prohibitions and injunctions for the Polish population:

— Germanization of all names;
— ban on the use of the Polish language;
— the Poles' exclusion from such privileges as children's allowances, loans to young married couples, etc.;
— ban on marriages between Poles and Germans;
— ban on the ownership of enterprises and land and on the performance of certain trades;
— a substantially lower remuneration for work;
— ban on the creation of Polish corporations, unions, and associations;
— closure of Polish theatres, cafés, restaurants, publishing houses, periodicals, and a ban on attendance at German theatres and cinemas; and
— ban on the possession of radio-sets and gramophones.

Further theses dealt with the problem of Germanization, defined as "re-nationalization" and treated as a racial, national and political problem. A further distinction was drawn between what was called racially genuine and non-genuine re-nationalization. With respect to the latter, Germanized persons retained their "racially conditioned spiritual separateness".

A separate chapter was devoted to the "particular treatment of ra-

cially valuable children". They were to be exempted from the expulsion campaign and Germanized in special establishments of the Third Reich. In principle such children were to be aged not more than eight to ten years. Their contacts with their Polish kinsmen were to be broken off and their new names were to be unequivocally German. All "racially valuable" children whose parents had fallen during hostilities, died or perished later, were to be immediately sent to German orphanages. It was also considered necessary to forbid the placing of "hereditarily healthy" Polish children in homes run by clergymen and to transfer them to German educational establishments. There was even a proposal that "neutrally disposed" Poles who would consent to place their children in German establishments should not be expelled.

The problem of the expulsion of the Polish population from what were known as regions incorporated into the Reich was discussed in broad outline. It was calculated that a total of some 5,363,000 people would be expelled. It was considered necessary to expropriate all agricultural land — including land owned by Poles for generations — in favour of German settlers. Thus the Polish farmer, deprived of his livelihood, would have to be expelled from the Reich unless he was Germanized.

Part III, the last part of the memorial, dealt with the cultural, political and living conditions in the remaining Polish territories. Primary schools in which no geography, history or gymnastics would be taught, were considered good enough for the Poles. Experienced retired Polish policemen were to be teachers there. No Polish unions were to be permitted. On the other hand, cafés and restaurants were to stay open because supervision over them was easier than over the private gatherings "which would no doubt be held and in which Polish history was so abundant".

A more detailed project or guidelines were worked out by Heinrich Himmler early in 1940. A document of May 15, 1940, headed "Some Ideas on the Treatment of Alien Peoples in the East" *(Einige Gedanken über die Behandlung der Fremdvölker im Osten)* contains the plans with regard to the Polish population, with particular emphasis on children.[7] Himmler's basic directives concerned the problem of education. There were to be four-grade primary schools which would teach children to count to 500 and to sign their name. Primarily, however, the principle would be instilled that "obedience to the Germans, honesty, diligence and politeness were God's injunctions to the Poles". The ability to read was not considered necessary. Parents who wished to give an education to their children would have to make an application to senior SS and police officers. On the basis of this application it would be decided first of all whether a child was "racially valuable". This was to determine its future. It would be sent to a school in Ger-

many in order to remain there for good. The parents' love of their children, whose future depended on the formers' loyalty, was to be a guarantee. Apart from this Heinrich Himmler planned an annual selection of children aged 6 to 10, according to "racial principles". "Racially valuable" children were to be treated identically as children whose parents had made an application that was accepted by the authorities. In German territory these children, after a change of name, were to have the same rights as German citizens.

Heinrich Himmler anticipated that by a consistent application of these principles, in the course of the next ten years only a "racially worthless" population would remain in Poland that would serve as a labour force for Germans "at their perennial task of building and creating".[8]

By a decree of October 7, 1939, Hitler made Heinrich Himmler, as the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom, responsible for population policy and all relevant problems. The guiding motive was contained in the thesis, voiced by Himmler — and consistently applied by his executive apparatus — that "good blood" had to be won while "band blood" was doomed to destruction or slavery".[9]

As early as the second half of 1940 the Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom paid close attention to Polish families suitable — according to Nazi racial criteria — for Germanization. Ulrich Greifelt, head of the Main Staff Office of the Reich Commissioner, in a letter of October 9, 1940, informed the Race and Settlement Head Office that an instruction had been issued to senior SS and police commanders about a ban on contacts between Polish families placed in the Third Reich for purposes of Germanization and Polish prisoners of war and labourers although "this might run into difficulties" in view of the fact that there were many prisoners and labourers in almost every village.[10] A month later, on November 9, 1940, Himmler issued a decree that ordered Polish families due to be Germanized to be sent to the Łódź department of the Race and Settlement Head Office, while those unfit for Germanization were to be handed over to the resettlement centre *(Umwandererzentralstelle)* for the purpose of expulsion.

The Nazi authorities generally were interested only in Polish families who had children. The latter were subjected to "racial" tests and examinations.

The realization of these long-term and short-term plans found its institutional reflection in a whole complex of juridical acts and official and secret decrees.

The most noteworthy of these was the inhuman procedure known as the German national list *(Volksliste)*. This was introduced in Polish

territories incorporated into the Reich on March 4, 1941, by a decree of the Reich Minister of Internal Affairs, Deputy Führer and *Reichsführer* SS in his capacity as Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom. In Poznań the German national list was introduced as early as October 28, 1939, and in the whole *Warthegau* (Warta Land) comprising the Poznań, Bydgoszcz and Łódź areas, early in 1940. The decree of March 4, 1941, defined the conditions for inclusion in the German national list and the legal status of the population whose division into four groups in principle coincided with the division made in Himmler's guidelines of September 12, 1942. Heinrich Himmler's other secret decrees of February 9 and 16, 1942, ultimately regulated the way in which individual groups were to be treated from the administrative point of view and conferred on persons belonging to the third group the same status as those of German nationality.

Himmler's decree of February 16, 1942, dealing with the treatment of persons classified in group IV of the *Volksliste*, drew attention to the negative influence which parents classified in this group might exert on the Germanization of their children. He ordered children to be taken away from their parents and placed in politically and ideologically reliable German families, if the negative influence of the parents could not be eliminated through police pressure. This was a frequent occurrence in Pomerania where the Germanization programme went beyond the framework marked out in the instruction and was also applied to families assigned to group III of the national list. Once it was established that children were educated in a Polish spirit, they were compulsorily taken away from their parents and given to German families in Pomerania or deep in the Reich for education. The population that was recognized as ethnically German was under absolute compulsion to sign the *Volksliste*. A refusal entailed sanctions including deportation to a concentration camp and in 1944 even the death penalty. Pressure was also exerted by orders to have children placed in special camps. Once their parents signed the *Volksliste*, these orders were annulled.

The problem of Polish children who were in orphanages and with adoptive parents was tackled by decree 67/I of February 19, 1942, issued by the Head Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom. These children were subjected to "racial examinations" and after positive results were obtained, were placed, depending on their age, in establishments of the *Lebensborn* or in German home schools (*Deutsche Heimschulen*).

After the German invasion of the Soviet Union, followed by the first military defeats, when a change was noticed in the reactions of the Polish population expressed in an ever more frequent refusal to sign the *Volksliste*, there suddenly arose the problem of "neglected

persons under age of Polish nationality who represent a moral threat to German youth". To prevent this, the Reich Minister of Interior issued a decree of December 3, 1942, depriving under age Poles of any social welfare protection and ordering children who were "neglected or threatened with neglect" to be sent to a special camp in Łódź.

In preparation for the war, the Nazi leadership trained its military, administrative and particularly police apparatus for absolute rule over the conquered territories. It was assumed in the summer of 1939 that terror alone would not be enough here. When the aggression against Poland was already decided, an agreement was concluded between the High Command of the military ground forces (OKH) and Reinhard Heydrich, the then head of the Security Police and the Security Service. Under this agreement, a special operational group composed of police and SS representatives was to be attached to each army unit. The task of these groups known as *Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei* was to physically liquidate what were called hostile and harmful elements in the territories occupied by the Wehrmacht. On the basis of the said agreement, on July 31, 1939 — that is one month before the invasion — the High Command of the military ground forces issued an order which set out the *Einsatzgruppen*'s scope of activity.

On his part, the Head of the Security Police and the SS Security Service issued directives that established the competence of these units in the areas that in future were to be occupied by the Third Reich. The *Einsatzgruppen* were also required to maintain permanent contact with the commands of individual armies, with the police and with various offices and occupation authorities. After the entry of Nazi troops, five *Einsatzgruppen* units and a special operational group whose task was to occupy and safeguard the industrial centres in Upper Silesia were active in Poland.

The *Einsatzgruppen* committed unprecedented mass murders of civilians, including women and children. On December 16, 1942, a secret order by Fieldmarshal Wilhelm von Keitel, head of the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW), authorized and obliged army units to use, in fighting operations, "every means regardles even with respect to women and children if in order to achieve success".[11]

On the initiative of the Ninth Army fighting in the East a decree was issued in June 1944 instructing the Army Group Centre to size 40,000 to 50,000 children aged ten to 14 in its area of operations and to send them to the Reich. This operation was code-named "Operation Hay" (*Heu-Aktion*).

The criminal campaign of expulsion of the Polish population was initiated by Heinrich Himmler's decree of October 30, 1939, which was based on Hitler's unpublished decree of October 7, 1939, on the strengthening of German folkdom. In this decree Himmler ordered spe-

cific groups to be expelled from the incorporated lands from November 1939 to February 1940. This operation, known as the plan for the near future *(Nahplan)*, was divided into three successive stages of which the last was to end in mid-January 1942.

In the General Government, formed in 1939 and encompassing the unincorporated part of Poland, i.e. Kielce, Cracow and Lublin voivodships and parts of Łódź and Warsaw voivodships, on November 12, 1942, after sporadic expulsion campaigns, Heinrich Himmler issued a decree ordering the creation, in the Zamość region, of the first area to be colonized. TThis provided the foundation for large-scale expulsions.

The fate of children over 10 evacuated from the Lublin, Radom and Lvov districts, was decided by Himmler during a several hour long stay in Cracow on October 6, 1942. Here he issued a decree on the formation of so-called "educational camps" in which racial examinations were to be carried out to decide whether these children would eventually be put under the care of the Third Reich. This order was issued in the form of a message to the head of the Resettlement Centre in Łódź, headed: "Urgent, to be submitted immediately, even on Sunday! Secret!" The order was soon modified in that it was decided to place the children evacuated from the above districts along with people over 60 in what were known as pensioner villages (*Rentendörfer*), for it was recognized that the sending of children to "educational camps" would lead to an intensification of the Polish resistance movement. The upper age limit of children put under German "care" was raised to 14 years. Older children were to be sent to forced labour in the Reich.

Heinrich Himmler also took up the problem of Polish girls sent to work in Germany by labour offices (*Arbeitsamt*). On March 4, 1942, he issued a decree to the effect that girls of "good blood", selected by the Race and Settlement Head Office, were to be sent to work in the "old Reich" (*Altreich*). Thus the Germanization campaign encompassed people who because of their age were excluded from the direct Germanization campaign.

In 1943, as war losses increased, attention was paid to pregnant women employed in the Reih under the forced labour system. Nazi policy here was inspired by the desire to restrict and check the natural increase of a hostile nation on the one hand and the wish to strengthen the German nation with a good "racial elements" on the other. This found expression in a decree by the *Reichsführer* for Health *(Reichsgesundheitsführer)* who on March 11, 1943, decided that at the request of a pregnant working woman her pregnancy could be terminated. In practice the procedure was that the woman was asked to sign an appropriate form, it being generally known that a refusal to do so could end in the woman being placed in a concentration camp. By

a secret order the pregnant women and the fathers were to be examined by the Race and Settlement Head Office. If this Office ascertained that the child to be born was "racially valuable" it was to prevent the abortion. A further decree [12] issued by the *Reichsführer SS* on July 27, 1943, regulated the procedure and gave instructions to the National-socialist Social Welfare (NSV) which took over the "racially valuable" children of working women. On its part the NSDAP Head Office for Social Welfare regulated this problem by a circular of January 20, 1944, treating pregnant Poles in a "privileged" way because they were supposed — in contrast to other nationalities — to possess "valuable racial characteristics". On the other hand children who had no such characteristics were generally doomed to extermination in various types of establishments and factory crèches. Detailed instructions were superfluous here, and extermination was carried out in the framework of the general guidelines.

The Nazi contempt and anti-humanitarian attitude towards disabled and sick people is revealed in the criminal treatment they referred to as euthanasia. Here too the legal basis was contained in Hitler's decree of September 1, 1939, which required *Reichsleiter* Philip Bouhler and Professor Karl Brandt, the Reich Commissioner for Health, to realize a programme of euthanasia with respect to people who were described as incurably sick.

Speaking of the problem of legality, Hitler stated that a totalitarian state would brook no difference between law and morality. Under the Nazi system a broadly conceived collective morality was based on the principle of obedience to what the authorities ordered.[13] This system was marked by the disappearance of the principle of "predictability" of decisions taken by the authorities because the decisions were not related to specific laws while laws were to be treated as a peculiar kind of morality. And this morality made of crimes — including crimes perpetrated against Polish children and young people — an institutional instrument of state policy.[14]

NOTES

[1] Archives of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland (hereafter AGK), Proces Bühlera, sygn. 6, Nuremberg document NG-2325; *Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des Reichsführers SS.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] AGK, International Military Tribunal (hereafter IMT), Case VIII (against the RuSHA). Nuremberg document NO-3732; cf. also "Program narodowościowy Rassen-

politisches Amt z 1939 roku na ziemiach polskich", Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce (hereafter Biuletyn GKBZHwP), Warszawa, 1948, vol. IV, pp. 135—171.

[4] M. Raushning, *The Voice of Destruction*, New York, 1940, p. 138.

[5] AGK, IMT, Doc. NG-2325.

[6] *Ibid.*, doc. NG-2325.

[7] *Ibid.*, doc. NO-1880.

[8] *Ibid.*, doc. NO-1880.

[9] Biuletyn GKBZHwP, vol. IV, p. 121; H. Himmler's speech of September 16, 1942, to senior SS officers at a briefing at Zhitomir.

[10] AGK, IMT, Case VIII.

[11] *Ibid.*, doc. 066—UK-A.

[12] *Ibid.*, doc. NO-1383.

[13] Franciszek Ryszka, *Państwo stanu wyjątkowego*, Wrocław — Warszawa — Kraków, 1964.

[14] *Ibid.*

2

Extermination of Polish Children and Young People

1. LIVING CONDITIONS

In discussing the situation of children and young people during the Nazi occupation it is impossible to deal with all aspects of the problem. Discrimination against Poles, and thereby also against the younger generation, was evident at every step. In the Poznań region (Great Poland) it was compulsory for Poles from the beginning of the war to bow to uniformed Germans and to make room for them by stepping off the pavement. Similar rules obtained in Pomerania and in the Białystok region.

The attitude of the Nazis to the Polish population is clearly defined in a remark made by Artur Greiser, the governor of the *Warthegau*, at a briefing in 1940: "Poles may work in our land but as farm-hands, and I call on you firmly to be brutal, tough and once more tough" [1]. The same Greiser allowed Poles to be punished by flogging [2].

Nur für Deutsche proclaimed inscriptions in cinemas, libraries and museums. "For Germans only" — this signboard placed in the gates of parks and children's playgrounds meant no admittance for Polish children.

In the *Warthegau* if Poles wanted to travel by rail or bus, they had to obtain special permits from the police, while bicycles had to be marked with white stripes.

In Pomerania and in Sillesia the police took reprisals against Poles walking in larger groups.

A curfew was imposed in the whole area of occupied Poland. The Polish population was also banned from possessing a number of objects, such as radio-sets, cameras and skis.

Thus the life of the youngest was deprived of a sense of security and stability, and their vitality was used up largely in the premature struggle for existence. For most of the day they stayed outside their home, working or peddling in order to gain means of subsistence. A wartime type of child was increasingly more evident, a child without childhood, prematurely independent and mature, suffering from a number of nervous stresses and disturbances, mainly in the emotional sphere.

A memorial on the situation of children in Poland, published in 1943 by the resistance movement, describes the daily scenes on the streets of Polish towns in these words:

> It is horrible to see these little ragamuffins, barefoot and half-naked, freezing and emaciated, singing with a thin raucous voice some canonical hours on frosty days, at the same time kneeling for hours on wet ground or shouting out furtively: 'cigarettes, matches, saccharine,' etc., and cutting a dash by smoking shag or drinking liquor...

The children of the street — as they were called at that time — were growing in number with every year of the occupation.

Hermann Göring said in 1942 at a conference of the Reich commissioners in the occupied areas of Europe: "It means nothing to me when you say that your people are dying of hunger. Let them perish as long as no German dies of hunger".[3] Fieldmarshal Gerd von Rundstedt, appointed supreme commander in the East in September 1939, thus formulated the problem:

> We, Germans, must overcome our neighbours twice. Consequently we shall be forced to destroy one third of the population in the neighbouring territories. We can do this through systematic malnutrition which ultimately produces better results, particularly among the young.[4]

The Third Reich's food supply policy in Poland was realized in accordance with these guidelines.

The feeding of Polish children and young people was connected with the introduction by the German occupation authorities of a rationing system which on the average met some 15 per cent of the real demand and covered only part of the Polish population in the General Government. The peasants not only were not covered but, on the contrary, were obliged to supply very large quotas of agricultural produce which substantially exceeded their production capacities. This led in consequence to constant, recurrent periods of hunger in the countryside, particularly before harvest time.

Food rations were insufficient, both in quantitative and in qualitative terms. Assuming that the meat ration for Germans was 100 per cent, for Poles in the General Government it amounted to 36 per cent only. According to a memorandum of the Upper Silesian Institute of Economic Research used as evidence at the Nuremberg trial[5], young Polish working people aged 14 to 20 were given food rations that were a third of those received by their German counterparts, children aged ten to 14 received 65 per cent less and children under ten 60 per cent less. This referred to Silesia, but conditions in other occupied Polish areas were similar. In the *Warthegau*, for instance, ration tickets for the Polish population were introduced in February 1941. Although

on July 15, 1941, the Germans issued a decree on the uniform provisioning of pregnant women of Polish and German nationality, as early as September 17, 1941, Artur Greiser modified its contents, depriving Polish women of additional rations during pregnancy and nursing, while in 1942 he banned all additional food rations for Polish children.

The memorandum of the Upper Silesian Institute of Economic Research stated:

As long as the mother feeds her baby herself, it takes everything it needs. The consequences of malnutrition in that period are borne not by the child but exclusively by the mother whose strength and health is undermined. [6]

The calorific value of the rations for Polish children amounted only to one third of the rations for German children (in case of children up to three years), and even one fourth in case of children above three years. Characteristic is the following specification of the rations in the General Government.[7]

	Protein grammes	Fats grammes	Carbo-hydrates grammes	Cal. value calories
Children up to 3 years				
German —				
rations for 28 days				
with meat and eggs	1,006.4	1,208	10,967.7	61,244
Polish —				
ration for 30 (or				
31 days)	475.2	68.8	4,043.4	19,160
with meat and eggs	532.8	79.6	4,043.8	19,464
Children from 3 to 10 years				
German —				
rations for 28 days				
with meat and eggs	1,926.6	1,545.8	13,466	76,454
Polish —				
rations for 30 days				
(or 31 days)	445.6	67.2	4,005	18,864
with meat and eggs	503.2	78	4,005.4	19,168
Children above 10 years				
German —				
rations for 28 days				
with meat and eggs	1,975.5	1,536.3	13,811.6	78,034
Polish —				
rations for 30 days				
(or 31 days)	522.6	74.2	4,762.8	20,904
with meat and eggs	580.2	85	4,763.2	21,208

A Day during the Nazi Occupation

Polish schools have been replaced by a German four-grade primary school

Old signboards are being replaced by new, German ones

From now on parks and playgrounds were *nur für Deutsche* (for Germans only)

The village of Michniów, Kielce voivodship, burnt down by the Germans

Turned out of their homes, uncertain of the morrow

After the "pacification" of yet another village

Whenever the Germans carried out public executions they made it compulsory for the local population to witness them in order to quell any hint of resistance

Children were often present at the execution of their parents and relatives

Another execution, this time in the village of Dmenin, Radomsko district

People being rounded up in Kercelego Square in Warsaw

The trucks which took people to concentration camps and to forced labour

Pacification of the village of Sochy, Lublin voivodship

Polish children in a prison in Bydgoszcz

V - A 3 - Nr.198/43 g. Berlin, den 13. Juli 1943

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Übersicht

über bisherige Anordnungen und Anregungen betr. Bandenkinderunterbringung.

Befehl des RFSS

1.) Am 6.1.43 hat RFSS befohlen, daß in den vom Chef des SS.W.V.-Hauptamtes vorgeschlagenen Kinder- und Halbwüchsigen- Sammellagern die rassische und politische Musterung der Jugendlichen zu erfolgen hat. "Die rassisch wertlosen Halbwüchsigen männlichen und weiblichen Geschlechts sind den Wirtschaftsbetrieben der Konzentrationslager als Lehrlinge zuzuweisen. Die Kinder müssen großgezogen werden. Ihre Erziehung hat im Unterricht zu Gehorsam, Fleiß, bedingungsloser Unterordnung und zu Ehrlichkeit gegenüber den deutschen Herren zu erfolgen. Sie müssen bis 100 rechnen, die Verkehrszeichen kennenlernen und auf ihre Fachberufe als Landarbeiter, Schlosser, Steinmetzer, Schreiner usw. vorbereitet werden. Die Mädchen sind als Landarbeiterinnen, Spinnerinnen, Strickerinnen und für ähnliche Arbeiten anzulernen."

Sonderregelung für Kinder unter 10 Jahren.

2.) Am 22.1.43 schrieb SS-Ostubaf.Dr. B r a n d t, Feldkommandostelle, an den Chef des W.V.-Hauptamtes: "Der RFSS bittet Sie, Kinderlager für Bandenkinder im Alter von 10 - 16 Jahren einzurichten. Lager für Kinder im Alter von 1 bis 10 Jahren richtet SS-Ogruf. von dem B a c h ein, mit dem der RFSS am 19.12.42 in der Feldkommandostelle gesprochen hat."

Ch.d.W.V.-Hauptamtes hat Bandenkinderlager in Lublin angeordnet.

3.) Am 25.1.43 berichtete SS-Ogruf. P o h l - W.V.-Hauptamt - an RFSS: "Unter Bezugnahme auf den Befehl vom 6.1.43 habe ich die Errichtung eines Kinder- und Halbwüchsigen-Sammellagers in Lublin angeordnet.

A document of the Reich Main Security Office containing instructions on the extermination of Polish children whose parents were active in the resistance movement

Errichtung des Bandenkinderlagers vom W.V.-Hauptamt zurückgestellt.

4.) Am 27.3.43 hat Amtsgruppe D des W.V.-Hauptamtes an das RSHA. IV C 2 auf Anfrage geantwortet, "daß nach FS-Nachricht der Amtsgruppe C im H-W.V.-Hauptamt bis auf Weiteres mit Rücksicht auf die Vordringlichkeit der Baumassnahmen im Konzentrationslager Lublin zunächst nichts in der Angelegenheit Kinderlager unternommen werde."

H.Gr.Nord erbittet Abnahme von 3 735 Bandenkindern.

5.) Am 21.4.43 übermittelte Ostubaf. Dr. Brandt, Feldkommandostelle, ein an RFH gerichtetes Schreiben der H.Gr. Nord vom 18.4.43 "H.Gr. Nord erbittet Abnahme von elternlosen und verwahrlosten Kindern aus dem altrussischen T[illegible] des Operationsgebietes in folgender Zahl:

unter 2 J.	266	davon männl.		108	weibl.	158
v. 2 - 5 J.	1006	"	"	457	"	549
" 6 - 14 J.	2463	"	"	1253	"	1210
insgesamt	3735			1818		1917

W.V.-Hauptamt bittet, RSHA V möge die Bandenkinderunterbringung übernehmen.

6.) Am 6.5.43 hat das H-W.V.-Hauptamt das RSHA. zu einer Besprechung gebeten, bei der auch H-Brigf G l ü c k s erklärte, daß seine Dienststelle für die Unterbringung von Bandenkindern nicht geeignet sei. Er bitte, daß die über 10 Jahre alten vom RSHA V übernommen werden.

H-Ogruf. v.d.Bach erklärt, die unter 10 Jahre alten Kinder nicht übernehmen zu können.

7.) Am 22.6.43 übermittelte H-Ostubaf. L i e [illegible]-h e n s c h e l ein FS. des H-Ogruf. von dem B a c h : "Zur Übernahme der Bandenkinder von der Heeresgruppe Nord stehen mir leider keine Heime zur Verfügung. Ich bitte daher von dortaus die zur Unterbringung der Kinder erforderlichen Schritte zu übernehmen",. Es handelt sich hier um 2 500 Kinder unter 10 Jahren.

Mütter und Kinder beisammen lassen ?

8.) Am 15.5.43 berichtet Einsatzgruppe B, daß bei den Evakuierungen ständig Frauen mit Kindern anfallen und schlägt vor, die Mütter nicht von den Kindern zu trennen, sondern sie gemeinsam in Lagern unterzubringen. Von je 10 - 20 Frau[illegible] könnte eine die Beaufsichtigung der Kinder übe[illegible]

Documents of Poles sent to forced labour: Jerzy Wojtkowicz, aged 13, and Katarzyna Tyszkowska, aged 12

Zivilarbeiter(in) polnischen Volkstums: Ausweis-Nr.

Name: (bei Frauen auch Geburtsname)

Wojtkowicz

Vorname

Jerzy

Geburtstag und -ort:

26.1.1931 in Warschau

Beruf:

früherer: Schüler

jetziger: z.Zt. Gärtnerei Topper

Familienstand: ledig — **Zahl der Kinder:**

Religion: röm.kath.

Heimatort: (Distrikt bezw. Bezirk, Kreis, Ort, Straße, Nr.)

Warschau, Bäckerstr. 6

Besondere Kennzeichen: keine

Fingerabdrücke (Zeigefinger)

links

rechts

Aufenthalt des/der Zivilarbeiters/in

von	bis	Name, Ort, Straße (Arbeitgeber)	Unterkunft (falls nicht bei Arbeitgeber wohnend)	Bemerkungen
9.9.44	bis			
9.10.44		Bahnmeisterei Baudach		
ab 9.10.44		Bahnmeisterei Topper	Bahnbaracke	

Über die von mir zu beachtenden Vorschriften und die Folgen bei Zuwiderhandlungen bin ich eingehend belehrt worden.

Frankfurt (Oder), den 194

(Unterschrift)

Zivilarbeiter(in) polnischen Volkstums: Ausweis-Nr.

Name: (bei Frauen auch Geburtsname)
Tyschkowska

Vorname:
Katarina

Geburtstag und -ort:
21.1.1932 in Warschau

Beruf:
früherer Schülerin
jetziger keiner

Familienstand: ledig Zahl der Kinder: keine

Religion: röm.kath.

Heimatort: (Distrikt bezw. Bezirk, Kreis, Ort, Straße, Nr.)
Warschau, Klosterstr. 27.

Besondere Kennzeichen: keine

Fingerabdrücke (Zeigefinger)

links

rechts

Aufenthalt des/der Zivilarbeiter(in)

von bis	Name, Ort, Straße (Arbeitgeber)	Unterkunft (falls nicht bei Arbeitgeber wohnend)	Bemerkungen
12.9.1944 9.12.44	Bahnmeisterei Topper Adolf Hitler Schanfela 6	Bahnbaracke Topper.	

Verordnung

über die Erstreckung der Arbeitspflicht für die polnische Bevölkerung des Generalgouvernements.

Vom 14. Dezember 1939.

Auf Grund des § 5 Abs. 1 des Erlasses des Führers und Reichskanzlers über die Verwaltung der besetzten polnischen Gebiete vom 12. Oktober 1939 (Reichsgesetzbl. I S. 2077) verordne ich:

§ 1

Die Chefs der Distrikte sind ermächtigt, die Arbeitspflicht für die polnischen Bewohner des Generalgouvernements auf Jugendliche zwischen dem 14. und 18. Lebensjahr auszudehnen. Der Arbeitseinsatz der Jugendlichen ist ihrer Leistungsfähigkeit anzupassen.

§ 2

Für den auf Grund des § 1 dieser Verordnung herangezogenen Personenkreis gelten sinngemäß die §§ 1 bis 4 der Verordnung über die Einführung der Arbeitspflicht für die polnische Bevölkerung des Generalgouvernements vom 26. Oktober 1939 (Verordnungsblatt G. G. P. S. 6).

§ 3

Diese Verordnung tritt sofort in Kraft.

Krakau, den 14. Dezember 1939.

Der Generalgouverneur für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete

Frank

Rozporządzenie

o rozciąganiu obowiązku pracy dla ludności polskiej Generalnego Gubernatorstwa.

Z dnia 14 grudnia 1939 r.

Na podstawie § 5 ust. 1 Dekretu Führer'a i Kanclerza Rzeszy Niemieckiej o Administracji okupowanych polskich obszarów z dnia 12 października 1939 r. (Reichsgesetzbl. I S. 2077, Dziennik Ustaw Rzeszy Niemieckiej I str. 2077) rozporządzam:

§ 1

Szefów Okręgowych upoważnia się do rozciągania obowiązku pracy dla polskiej ludności Generalnego Gubernatorstwa na młodzież między 14. i 18. rokiem życia. Zatrudnienie młodzieży należy przystosować do zdolności roboczej.

§ 2

Do osób, podlegających obowiązkowi pracy na podstawie § 1 niniejszego rozporządzenia, stosuje się analogicznie §§ 1—4 rozporządzenia o wprowadzeniu obowiązku pracy dla polskiej ludności Generalnego Gubernatorstwa z dnia 26 października 1939 r. (Dziennik rozporządzeń G. G. P. str. 6).

§ 3

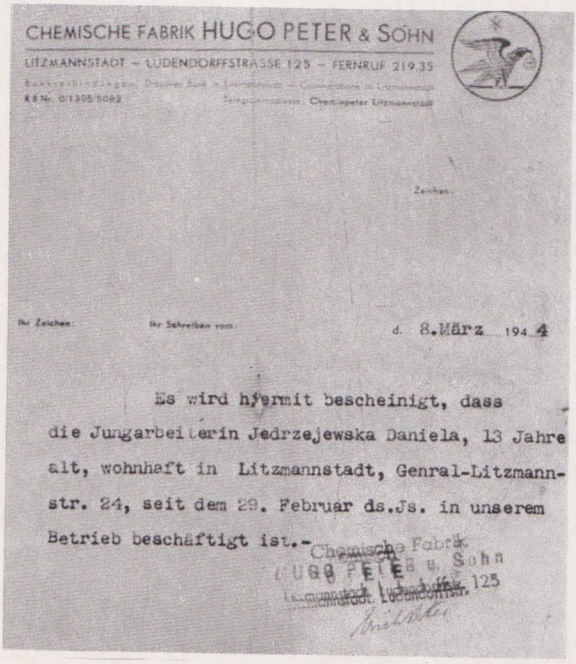
Niniejsze rozporządzenie wchodzi w życie natychmiast.

Krakau (Kraków), dnia 14 grudnia 1939 r.

Generalny Gubernator dla okupowanych polskich obszarów

Frank

A decree on the obligation to forced labour binding on the Polish population in the General Government. Paragraph 1 provides for the employment of children above the age of 14



CHEMISCHE FABRIK HUGO PETER & SOHN
LITZMANNSTADT – LUDENDORFFSTRASSE 125 – FERNRUF 219.35

Ihr Zeichen: Ihr Schreiben vom: d. 8.März 1944

Es wird hiermit bescheinigt, dass die Jungarbeiterin Jedrzejewska Daniela, 13 Jahre alt, wohnhaft in Litzmannstadt, Genral-Litzmannstr. 24, seit dem 29. Februar ds.Js. in unserem Betrieb beschäftigt ist.-

Chemische Fabrik HUGO PETER u. Sohn Litzmannstadt, Ludendorffstr. 125

A letter confirming the employment of Daniela Jędrzejewska, aged 13, in a chemical enterprise in Łódź

A document of the Reich Main Security Office outlining a project to set up a special camp for Polish women and children at Trawniki, Lublin voivodship. The term "bandits" refers to members of the Polish antifascist resistance movement

Ia 1891/43 g.Kdos.

Reichssicherheitshauptamt
- IV D 5 - 1118/43 g

Bitte in der Antwort vorstehendes Geschäftszeichen und Datum anzugeben

Persönl. Stab Reichsführer-SS
Sonderkurier Gruppenführer Wolff
z.H. Obf. Grothmann

Berlin SW 11, den 10. Juli 1943
Prinz-Albrecht-Straße 8
Fernsprecher: Ortsverkehr 120040 · Fernverkehr 1

Geheim!

Reg.: 19. JUL. 1943
Ia

An den
Kommandostab Reichsführer-SS
z.H.von SS-Standartenführer R o h d e

Feldkommandostelle.

Betrifft: Geschlossene Unterbringung von Bandenfrauen mit Kindern in einem Sonderlager Trawniki.

Vorgang: Ohne.

Die Einsatzgruppe B. der Sicherheitspolizei und SD. teilt mit, dass bei Bandenbekämpfungsaktionen und Evakuierungen ständig Frauen mit Kindern anfallen, deren Männer freiwillig oder gezwungen bei den Banditen sind. Die Einzelunterbringung der Kinder in besonderen Lagern stiess bisher auf Schwierigkeiten. Das RSHA, Amt V, ist z.Z. damit befasst, eine Klärung dieser Frage herbeizuführen. Die Einsatzgruppe B. schlägt in diesem Zusammenhange vor, die Mütter von den Kindern nicht zu trennen, sondern diese Familien in besonderen Lagern unterzubringen. Die Arbeitsfähigkeit der Frauen könnte dadurch erhalten bleiben, dass jeweils eine Frau die Beaufsichtigung der Kinder übernimmt. Ferner wäre die Bewachung nicht in dem üblichen strengen Rahmen erforderlich, da die Fluchtgefahr bei Frauen mit kleinen Kindern im fremden Gebiet erheblich herabgemindert ist. Weiterhin würde eine spätere evtl. Rückführung der Bandenfamilien vereinfacht sein.

Auf Grund einer Besprechung des Kommandoführers des Einsatzkommandos 9 der Sicherheitspolizei und SD. in Lublin mit dem SS- und Polizeiführer, SS-Gruppenführer Globocnik, hat sich dieser bereit erklärt, Bandenfrauen mit Kindern in einem ihm direkt unterstellten Sonderlager Trawniki bei Lublin aufzunehmen und zu beschäftigen. Das Lager könnte nach einigen Vorbereitungen auf ein Fassungsvermögen von

Regierung des Generalgouvernements
- Hauptabteilung Arbeit -
G.Z.: II 5770

Krakau, den 23. März 1942

Runderlaß Nr. 41/42

An die
Herren Leiter der Abteilungen Arbeit
in den Ämtern der Distrikte und
an die
Herren Leiter der Arbeitsämter
im Bereiche des Generalgouvernements

Betrifft: Landarbeiteraktion 1942; hier: Einsatz von Jugendlichen in der deutschen Landwirtschaft.

Wie mir der Herr Reichsarbeitsminister mit Schreiben vom 3. 3. 42 mitteilt, wird für den Einsatz in der deutschen Landwirtschaft eine größere Anzahl von Jugendlichen benötigt, unter denen sich auch schwächere Burschen im Alter von 13 bis 15 Jahren befinden können. Im Hinblick auf die ungünstige Verkehrslage bittet der Herr Reichsarbeitsminister jedoch, die zur Verfügung stehenden Sonderzüge vorerst in erster Linie mit vollwertigen Landarbeitern zu besetzen.
Ich gebe Ihnen auf der Rückseite mein Antwortschreiben bekannt mit der Bitte um Beachtung. Sobald es die Transportverhältnisse zulassen, ist die Werbung von Jugendlichen in vollem Umfang aufzunehmen. Im alten Bereich des Generalgouvernements ist das Aufkommen schon jetzt nicht mehr so groß, daß durch die Werbung Jugendlicher der Abtransport von erwachsenen Arbeitskräften beeinträchtigt werden könnte. Im Interesse einer besseren Ausnutzung der Sonderzüge kann die Werbung von Jugendlichen daher schon jetzt uneingeschränkt beginnen. Ich bitte jedoch, die Anwerbung von unter 16 Jahre alten Jugendlichen im allgemeinen auf das männliche Geschlecht zu beschränken.

Im Auftrage:
Im Entwurf gez.: Dr.v. Gschließer
Ausgefertigt:
Wolter
Angestellte.

A document of the Labour Head Office in the General Government dealing with the employment of Polish children and young people on German farms

It should be pointed out that the period for which rations were issued was different for German and for Polish children. It should also be remembered that the Polish population never received meat and eggs together, as was registered in the specification. These rations excluded each other, that is in certain months meat was allotted while in others eggs were issued instead of meat.

The problem of nutrition of Polish children would have been less tragic had it not been for the fact that rations for Polish children were often theoretical only. In certain periods they were reduced to zero, in others they were realized only in part. The memorandum on the situation of children mentioned above provides such examples for 1942:

(1) Certain rural communes in the General Government (Radom District) obtain no ration tickets for the smallholders or for the landless population, that is not for their children either.
(2) The provision of milk for children up to three years of age, theoretically provided for in the rations, is almost non-existent.
(3) The provision of sugar, marmalade, flour and groats — even in the minimum quantities destined for the Polish population — is very often stopped for several months.
(4) This also applies to meat which, if provided at all, is issued in reduced quantities (100 grammes per person per month).

Because of these restrictions the value of rations in many localities was reduced by half or even more. In Warsaw in May and June 1942 they averaged some 375 calories, instead of the 700 provided for.

Poles tried in various ways to obtain additional food. They cultivated allotments, bred rabbits — which most often was the task of children — traded wherever possible and in whatever possible. In the General Government the urban population supplied itself with food mainly in the countryside, bringing it to town illegally. Smuggling — as it was called at that time — was connected with a tremendous risk and the threat of reprisals including imprisonment in a concentration camp. The provision of food was by no means an easy problem, for illegal butchering could be punished by the death penalty. Little children sneaking out of railway stations and going furtively to their homes with food brought from the countryside were a daily sight in occupied Polish towns. The existing food supply system threatened most urban residents with starvation. Consequently, self-preservation assumed various forms, and the children's share in it was not insignificant.

Constant hunger led to a loss of physical resistance, great susceptibility to sickness and a high mortality rate.

The medical examinations of children (registered in public primary schools) carried out in Warsaw in the school year 1942/43, showed that 42.5 per cent of children were threatened with tuberculosis.

According to district physicians from the Krosno region, more than

80 per cent of children were affected with anaemia caused by malnutrition. Cases of hunger oedema and death were fairly frequent. Although typhus was reduced to sporadic cases, tuberculosis spread in a terrifying way.

The following specification of deaths has been preserved in the town of Siedlce:

1938 — 418 persons
1939 — 464 persons
1940 — 647 persons
1941 — 771 persons

Dr Wilhelm Hagen, the medical officer of Warsaw, stated late in 1941 that the number of cases of tuberculosis had increased in the Reich by 10 per cent, and in the General Government by 50 per cent.[8]

The Polish population's access to medical help was restricted. Cases are well known of German physicians giving sick persons, particularly juveniles and pregnant women working in industry, a clean bill of health. Children's hospitals in most cases were turned into hospitals for the army or for German children. Most children's convalescent homes were closed, too. Thus Polish children were practically deprived of medical help, including prophylactic treatment.

The effects of starvation were intensified by an unprecedented shortage of clothes. The years of the war depleted stocks and ration cards for the purchase of clothes in the General Government were given only to farmers as a premium for the quotas of agricultural produce delivered to the Germans and for their surpluses. In the Dąbrowa industrial basin clothing cards for Poles entitled their holders to rations that were 40 to 50 per cent lower than those issued to Germans. Non-working persons above the age of 13 had their ration cards taken away. No clothes were issued for them officially from July 1943, practically from 1942.

In the *Warthegau* the occupation authorities made a distinction between the Poles and the German population also as regards the supply of clothes. Poles did not obtain the clothes they needed most and in any case were entitled to hardly any.[9]

The tiny income (the real wage of a Polish worker in 1943 amounted to eight per cent of his pre-war wage) was spent wholly on the purchase of food. No money was left for the purchase of clothes on the black market. Consequently, in the countryside and in towns thousands of children did not leave their often unheated homes in winter.

In recollections of those days we read:

Among the Polish population of Sochaczew there are families whose children do not leave their beds for they have no suitable clothes. There are dwellings where

water drops from the ceiling when it rains. Here and there people lack beds and sleep on beds of straw or outright on the floor. There is a shortage of linen, bedclothes, clothes and shoes, in a word utter misery.[10]

Thus there was no fuel and kerosene which was used in most homes for lighting purposes. For this reason kerosene lamps were from 1940 generally replaced by carbide lamps. The supply of soap and soap powders was also insufficient. Poles received much worse products than Germans and half their allocation.

The Polish population was also totally deprived of welfare benefits. The insurance statute of 1942 ultimately regulated their situation in the regions incorporated into the Reich. Care for pregnant women was reduced to a minimum, there were no old age pensions or orphan allowances and widows' pensions were very much reduced. A German woman with three children received a widow's pension amounting to 80 per cent of her husband's earnings while a Polish woman obtained 50 per cent of her husband's earnings if she had at least four children under 15,[11] otherwise none at all. In the General Government sick and childbirth benefits were reduced to a half and children's allowances were abolished.

The fatal sanitary conditions and the absence of health care were aimed at the extermination of the Polish nation, particularly of Polish children and young people. The Germans here acted according to a recommendation by Hitler who said that "to attempt to provide for the non-German population of the Eastern areas health care on the German model would be sheer madness" [12].

On April 9, 1943, Artur Greiser thus defined the role of German doctors.

A physician is confronted with two tasks: to harness the health service into the nationality struggle with a view to removing the alien nation, and to exploit the alien labour force to the utmost.

Thus the Nazi occupying forces deprived Polish children of the right to learning, the right to a normal physical development, the right to organize any form of social life, the right to develop, the right to their own nationality, and ultimately the right to live.[13]

2. POLISH SCHOOLS

The Nazi invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, disorganized the beginning of the school year. In localities which were not conquered by Wehrmacht units early in September, teachers who remained on the spot opened Polish schools with support from the public. In Great

Poland, for instance, 342 schools were opened for Polish children and 991 teachers began to teach 58,255 pupils.[14] In many schools teaching started late.

The Nazi administrative and police authorities set about eliminating Polish schooling almost immediately. Many teachers were arrested and executed. In spite of reprisals, they tried to continue teaching as long as possible. The German response was, however, increasingly sharper and the mass expulsion of the Polish population from Great Poland decided the fate of Polish schools. In March 1940 they were all closed down and from April 1940 German schools were set up for Polish children known as *Polenschulen* whose principal aim was Germanization. These schools were few in number (in Poznań, for instance, there were only four), they were situated on the outskirts of towns, and were open only two or three days a week. The average teaching time was two hours daily. Children were taught the German language, basic arithmetic, German geography, domestic science, and exercises to encourage discipline and obedience to the German nation, the "master race". Children were often used for various types of work. They completed their schooling at the age of 12, and were then sent to work in the Reich.

In Gdańsk all Polish teachers were dismissed in the first days of September 1939 and public and private schools where the language of instruction was Polish were closed. Most teachers were sent to concentration camps or resettled. Polish schools were closed in the whole of Pomerania. All that remained were schools where German was the language of instruction, with separate classes for Polish children whose parents were registered on the German national list. These schools served the purpose of Germanization, and the curricula and selection of teachers guaranteed the implementation of the Germanization programme.

In Opole regency the few Polish schools there were closed in 1942 and their pupils were sent to German schools. Only Upper Silesia had schools in which lessons were taught in Polish, and obligatory schooling covered 70 to 80 per cent of children who were recognized as Polish.[15]

In the General Government primary schools were allowed to stay open. The first decree concerning the school system was issued by Governor General Hans Frank, on October 31, 1939, and stated that children of German nationality could attend only German schools, while Polish children must attend Polish schools[16]. It made it mandatory to open German schools in localities inhabited by more than ten German children. Only German teachers could teach in these schools.

Polish literature, history and geography were struck off the list of subjects taught in Polish primary schools. Textbooks and school aids were eliminated and libraries were liquidated. Schools were located in

private dwelling houses unsuitable for this purpose. Teaching took place in several shifts which forced the teachers to shorten their lessons to 30 minutes. Schools on the whole did not operate in the winter months, in view of the shortage of fuel.

In the second half of 1942 the Nazi authorities finally set out to liquidate private schools which up to that time had officially operated in certain towns (e.g. in Warsaw). This was in accordance wiht Heinrich Himmler's instruction of May 15, 1940, which read:

> For the non-German population of the East there can exist no schools higher than four-grade primary schools. The goal in such a school must be exclusively simple figures at the most to 500, the signing of one's name, learning that it is God's injunction to be obedient to the Germans, to be honest, diligent and polite. Reading is not considered to be necessary.[17]

The repeatedly quoted memorandum drawn up by Dr Erich Wetzel and Dr Gerhard Hecht contains, aside from other things, the following postulates:

> Only primary schools will be permitted. They may, however, provide only the simplest basic knowledge, such as arithmetics, reading and writing. The teaching of subjects that are important from the Polish national point of view is out of the question. On the other hand, schools should prepare pupils for agriculture and forestry and for simple trades.[18]

The memorandum under discussion thus dealt with the question of the teaching staff: "It seems expedient that retired, deserving Polish police officials should later be appointed as teachers in primary schools. Thanks to this the training of teachers will become superfluous".

The largest number of regulations on the organization of the school system was issued with respect to vocational schools. These were to provide the theoretical and practical knowledge necessary for the exercise of a trade.

Regulations were also published concerning additional training in various trades. Plants which employed ten or more persons were under the obligation to train a number of apprentices corresponding to the number of skilled manual workers employed there. Even in schools which were favoured by the Germans the standard was lowered and the scope of knowledge imparted to the pupils narrowed. The original two-year courses which prepared pupils for entrance examinations at vocational schools were abolished at the end of the 1941/42 school year. Admittance to a school was conditional on the completion of 18 years of age, completion of the primary school course, two years' practical work and a successful entrance examination. One might ask

here where the school leavers could do their practical work in view of the mass closure of Polish shops and industrial enterprises, and how they were to acquire the knowledge necessary to pass the examinations.

General education secondary schools and institutes of higher education were closed at the end of 1939. The population of the General Government was to be composed of uneducated people deprived of an intellectual leadership and supplying the Third Reich with seasonal farm-hands and with manpower in many branches of industry.

Although at the beginning of October 1939 young people were allowed to sit examinations at institutions of higher education, including Warsaw University, as early as November 1939 all schools of higher learning were closed. On November 6, all university professors and staff in Cracow were invited to attend a lecture in a building of the Jagiellonian University. As many as 183 prominent scholars and teachers arrived to listen to the lecture. They were surrounded by police, loaded onto lorries and sent to the Montelupi prison in Cracow and next to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. The Nazis also murdered university staff in Warsaw, Poznań, Lublin and Lvov. A similar course of action was adopted as regards general education secondary schools in Cracow which reopened on the distinct instruction of the district president. On November 9, police entered the school buildings and arrested the teachers there. The same took place in other towns, too.

Thus many secondary schools had been liquidated even before all state and private secondary schools and higher teacher training institutes were dissolved formally in mid-December.

3. FORCED LABOUR FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The forced labour which Polish children were liable to do during the Nazi occupation was an instrument for the extermination of the youngest generation.

The Nazis denied the Polish nation's right to biological existence, and disregarded the capacities and age of the young people who were forced to work. They were guided exclusively by the need to supply manpower for the war economy.

Formally the obligation to work applied to children aged 12 and upwards in the territories incorporated into the Reich and 14 and upwards in the General Government. In reality, however, this age limit was arbitrarily lowered.[19] For in official legal acts it was deemed necessary to preserve the semblance that the rules on the protection of juvenile labour, binding in civilized countries, were observed.

In the *Warthegau*, for instance at Chodzież, in the summer of 1942 the occupation authorities employed seven-year-old children at harvest time. In Poznań ten-year old children sorted potatoes in August and September 1943. Their work went on for 10 hours daily. In the summer of 1943 the Nazis also forced 12-year-old children to work at earth works in the Gniezno district.[20]

Children also worked in many labour camps. The camp at Andrychów (Kielce voivodship) existed from September 1942 to November 1943 and the children there also worked at earth works. After the camp was liquidated the women and children were deported to Auschwitz.

At a labour camp at Chełmiec near Nowy Sącz, and in the Biłgoraj camp children worked in agriculture.

At Poniatowa in the Lublin district the labour camp was set up in the autumn of 1941 and liquidated in July 1944. A total of 18,000 prisoners, Polish Jews and Jews from other occupied European countries, passed through this camp. Children represented a substantial percentage of the prisoners who worked in industry, in the forest, at road construction.

In the camp at Trawniki in the Lublin region children cut peat, and at Rusinowo near Bydgoszcz children aged ten to 14 worked on farms and collected stones. After the camp was liquidated the children were sent to work on German farms.

Among the inmates of the extermination camp at Treblinka there were also children aged 12 to 15. So far it has been impossible to establish how large the group of prisoners under age was. Witness Maks Lewit, testifying before the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, spoke of 60 boys, forced to do hard labour beyond their capacity, inhumanly treated and murdered before the eyes of other prisoners. They arrived in the camp in March 1942 and within a few days 15 of the youngest were murdered. Fifteen more boys were murdered either at work or in other circumstances. The others survived until July 1944 when during the liquidation of the camp they were executed by shooting along with other prisoners. As many as 120 Jewish children brought from Warsaw stayed in this camp in 1943 and were murdered on June 18, 1943.[21]

Women and children from Poland, Czechoslovakia, France and Holland were held in the labour camp at Blachownia Śląska. They worked in a synthetic petrol factory. Many children died of hunger and of typhoid fever and dysentery epidemics. Polish and Soviet women and children were imprisoned in the labour camp at Grelichowo near Bolesławiec where they worked in an aircraft factory. Many similar cases could be enumerated.[22]

Tens of thousands of Polish children were sent deep into the Reich to labour camps attached to various factories and to work on German

farms. The mass deportation of Poles to work deep in the Third Reich was supervised by special labour offices (*Arbeitsamt*) whose network was organized as early as in September 1939. The labour offices had special youth departments (*Jugendamt*) which ruthlessly sent young people to work on farms, in industry and in the Reich.

This is how a 16-year-old girl describes her transportation from her native village and the beginning of her work for the Third Reich: [23]

> After three days of a ghastly journey, half choked, we were put down at the railway station at Stargard Szczeciński. Next we were driven to the *Arbeitsamt* where buyers waited for us. Each of these buyers inspected us like cattle. Young, strong girls were fought for.

In an effort to exploit Polish manpower to the maximum, some labour offices applied peculiar methods. Homes were penetrated, even old people and children were registered, round-ups were organized in public places. Particularly cruel was the treatment of school children deported to the Reich. Here is an example: a vocational school at Gorlice near Cracow for young people aged 12 to 16 was surrounded by police during school hours. In the evening the pupils, hungry and freezing, deprived of spare clothing and provisions (it was winter), were carried by lorries to the railway station and next by train to forced labour in Germany.[24] Many available Nazi documents on this problem point to the role which manpower from the occupied countries played in the German economy. Among other things, the employment of Polish youth in German agriculture is dealt with in a circular of March 1942, issued by Governor Hans Frank in the General Government. This circular states: "The Reich Minister for Labour informed me by a letter of March 3, 1942, that a substantial number of young people among whom may be weaker boys, aged 13 to 15, was necessary for work in German agriculture".[25]

Fritz Sauckel, appointed Reich Plenipotentiary for Labour in March 1942, issued an instruction on April 20, on the employment of 500,000 healthy and strong girls in the Reich. They were to help in the households of German mothers with many children.[26]

The labour market in the occupied countries shrank with every year while the demand for manpower in the Third Reich grew. At a conference on the Reich's four-year plan on March 19, 1942, Adolf Hitler said: "Germany must adopt conscription [to work] if the principle of voluntary recruitment does not prove successful." In the last stage of the war, because of the losses sustained on all fronts, the Third Reich suffered from an acute shortage of manpower. At this time particularly brutal procedures were adopted to secure juvenile labour from Poland. Up to the middle of 1942 the authorities of the Third Reich considered

that the deportation of whole families to the Reich, both from the General Government and the incorporated regions, was undesirable for many reasons. On the other hand they raised no objection to the deportation to forced labour of children alone, for tending cattle for instance.

A total mobilization of the labour force for the needs of the war was announced in February 1943. From that time work became absolutely compulsory for all, including children aged ten or 12 and even pregnant women and nursing mothers. On September 10, 1943, Heinrich Himmler issued a decree that made it permissible to deport children over ten to work in the Reich. Instructions issued on January 27, 1943, and on July 24, 1944, worsened still more the conditions of enlistment and work.[27]

The hostilities provided an opportunity to seize homeless and stray children. In the course of the attack by Nazi troops in the East in 1944 it was decided to use all opportunities to secure as many children as possible for work in the Reich (*Heu-Aktion*). The Army Group Centre planned to size 40,000 to 50,000 children, and the Northern Ukraine Group 135,000. This campaign did not, however, produce the expected results.

The Nazi labour law binding on Poles operated, of course, in the interest of the employer. No contracts regarding the duration of work etc. were signed with Poles and juveniles were treated as full adults with all the resultant consequences. Their employers required of them the same productivity and quality of work as of adult workers. They were paid, however, according to lower rates, envisaged for persons under 18 years of age. These and other moves which discriminated against Polish children and young people were fully sanctioned in the confidential circular of June 12, 1942, by Fritz Sauckel, the Reich Plenipotentiary for Labour.

In armaments factories juveniles worked under difficult conditions, harmful to health. The Krupp armaments concern, for instance, employed a large number of children aged 11 to 17 throughout the occupation, and in 1944 even six-year old children. A special camp was organized in the Krupp works for the children employed there.[28]

The conditions prevailing in the production halls of textile factories were very harmful to health. They differed little from the conditions of work in agriculture, though the type of work was different. In order to achieve the highest possible productivity the managers applied repressive means, established high output quotas and introduced the strict supervision of the workers. A high work load, ranging from 12 to 14 hours daily, was one of the discriminative methods. Hunger, exhaustion, hard conditions of work and continuous repression attended the Polish children and young people who worked compulsorily for the Third Reich.

A doctor from the labour camp at Wuppertal wrote in his reports,

whit survived the war, of ten-year-old girls working in industry who were starving, and a document submitted at the first Nuremberg trial mentions a factory at Zeititz near Wurzen where Polish children aged ten and more received 2 kilos of bread, 200 grammes of butter or margarine and 250 grammes of sugar monthly and nothing more.

Children's work brought multi-million profits to the concerns. At the Nuremberg trial of the chief war criminals it was demonstrated that the Nazis "caused the extreme emaciation of children aged eight to ten, compelling them to do the same hard work as adults. Work beyond their strength, beating and torment quickly exhausted the children who were then killed." [29]

4. THE CONSTRUCTION SERVICE IN THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT

A significant role in the realization of the Third Reich's extermination plans in the General Government was performed by the institution of the Construction Service (*Baudienst*). The point was not only to intimidate the public, particularly young people, in order to prevent recruitment to the resistance movement but also to limit the birth rate which aroused great concern on the part of the occupation authorities. The gratuitous exploitation of the labour force was also of economic importance.

The *Baudienst* was created in the Cracow district in May 1940.[30] According to the intentions of Governor General Hans Frank, Cracow was to be an important German administrative and transport centre. Consequently efforts were made to give it a proper appearance. Houses and road surfaces were renovated by the *Baudienst* which was composed of 1,100 young, forcibly enlisted Poles.

In spite of unusually severe sanctions, some of the age-groups, called up to serve in the Construction Service, avoided enlistment. Essentially, this service was similar to work in penal camps. However, some young people decided to work in this organization in order to escape deportation to the Reich. The juveniles were housed in barracks while they performed this service. From 1943 only those who had completed the Construction Service were admitted into vocational schools.

The problem of limiting the birth rate among Poles was discussed at a conference in the Reich Ministry of Interior in Berlin in May 1941. It was proposed to introduce long-term compulsory work linked to service in labour battalions confined to barracks. These proposals also applied to the General Government and to the *Baudienst* that already functioned there.[31]

A witness, called up to forced labour, testified:

The Construction Service was a real nightmare. Life in dirt among insects, in

barracks filled with water in autumn and spring, we are treated like beasts. Our inspector swore at us constantly and what is engraved most in my memory is the term *polnische Schweine*. Our *Vorwerker's* cruelty was sophisticated, a brute, drunkard, he ill-treated us. The horrible conditions, like dirt, getting up early, namely at 2.30 o'clock, was still nothing as compared to our moral suffering.[32]

An example of what reprisals were applied in case of a refusal to report to the service is provided by a verdict issued by the Special Court (*Sondergericht*) at Radom on March 5, 1942. It sentenced Roman Jasiński, born in Warsaw, to six years in prison for "evading the Construction Service".

A decree of the General Government autohorities of July 24 1943, even provided for the death penalty for young Poles evading work in the service.[33]

In the middle of 1941 the Service already numbered 120,000 members. In January 1944 this number went down to about 45,000 to drop to from 4,000 to 5,000 in July of the same year.

The slave labour of young Poles in the *Baudienst* brought 28 milion working days to the General Government administration in return for scanty means of subsistence.[34]

Among the *Baudienst* camps was one known as "Liban" in Cracow, where young people were sent who were sluggish in work or were recognized by the Germans as deserving punishment for other reasons. The camp was situated in the Cracow limestone quarries and stone-pits, an enterprise previously owned by the firm Liban and Eksenpreis SA. This explains its popular name. The camp was set up in the spring of 1942. The prisoners lived in sheds and barracks and worked in quarries for 12 hours a day. Many prisoners, considered dangerous, were chained during work. The camp had a high mortality rate. It ceased to exist as late as July 1944.

5. THE NAZI EXPULSION CAMPAIGNS

The Germanization of the Slav territories in the East — the German Third Reich's great self-styled "historical mission" — called for a huge eviction and resettlement campaign.

In *Mein Kampf* Adolf Hitler proclaimed that a purely linguistic Germanization did not signify true Germanization, and that a racially alien people which expressed its thoughts in the German language, brought discredit to the greatness and dignity of the German nation. The realization of the Germanization campaign called for a change in the national character of the occupied areas through the displacement of one part of the Polish population and the assimilation of the remaining part that was recognized as a "racially desirable" element.

After the Nazis conquered Poland they immediately set out to realize

their great programme of Germanization, beginning with the incorporation of the Polish western and northern territories directly into the Reich. Part of the Polish population were arrested on the basis of proscriptive lists drawn up earlier, many were next killed in executions or in concentration camps. Most inhabitants were deported in unheated railway carriages to forced labour in the Reich or to the General Government in the cold winter of 1939-40.

On October 7, 1939, Hitler issued a decree that ordered the settlement of Germans, living beyond the Third Reich's frontiers, in Polish lands and at the same time the expulsion of Poles from these lands. On October 12, the occupying forces began a mass expulsion campaign in the coastal area. Poles were expelled from Gdynia, Wejherowo, Gdańsk and Tczew. Next the displacement campaign was extended to Pomerania. In Bydgoszcz, for instance, it started in the first days of May, 1940. Up to November 15, 1940, a total of 30,758 persons were expelled to the General Government. Of that number one third were children. Some 600,000 Poles, among whom about 250,000 to 300,000 were children, were expelled from the *Warthegau* in the period from October 22, 1939, to the end of October 1944.[35]

The displacement of the Polish population was in effect an extermination campaign. Poles were evicted from their homes or farms and deprived of their property. With respect to children the expulsion was a particularly heinous crime. The dreadful conditions under which the expulsion was carried out, no matter what the season, the shortage of food and water during transportation and the conditions in the resettlement camps often meant death to children. Many of them died of hunger and cold on their way to the camps. 30 children, for instance, were found frozen to death in a carriage at the railway station at Dębica, 500 at Pilawa. The resettlement camps were located mostly in old factories or in buildings with no sanitary installations. Infectious diseases spread in the camps because of dirt and insects. The expellees slept on floors, often concrete floors. Hunger, epidemics and disastrous hygienic conditions decimated the children. "Coughing and the whimpering of dying children are the usual music of these camps," reads the memorandum mentioned earlier.

Particularly hard conditions prevailed at the resettlement camp at Potulice where the first transport of displaced persons arrived on February 1, 1941. In the course of 12 days 1,989 persons, adults and children, from Bydgoszcz and the Bydgoszcz and Sępólno counties passed through it. They were next deported to the township of Piaseczno near Warsaw. New transports of displaced persons arrived in the camp early in March 1941 from the Lipno and Rypin counties. More than 3,000 persons passed through the camp in the period from Febrauary 1, to March 15, 1941.

The Potulice camp was reopened in May 1941. As many as 1,392 expellees, families from the Wyrzysk county, passed through it until the end of July 1941. At the same time the Germans began to build a new camp at Potulice. It was completed in stages up to the end of 1942.

In that period the Potulice camp was used mainly for people from rural areas, expelled in connection with the settlement of Germans. As the transports included whole families, many children stayed in the camp. In the period when the expulsion campaign was at its most intense in that area (from August 1, 1941, to December 31, 1942), 8,233 displaced persons passed through the Potulice camp.[36]

In 1943 and 1944 children represented a substantial percentage among those confined in the camp but — in contrast to the previous period — they were without their parents. A special department for children was organized in the camp and children under 12 were occupied working on estates, picking and knapping stones, etc. Older children were registered in the camp files as adults. Among those staying at the Potulice camp were children of members of the Polish resistance movement, children brought from Silesia who had passed through the prison at Mysłowice and other camps, from Łódź and Poznań. A transport of 542 Soviet children (241 boys and 301 girls) from Byelorussia arrived at Potulice on November 5, 1943. Apprehended with their mothers in the environs of Vitebsk and Smolensk, they passed through the Auschwitz camp and, after being separated from their families, were brought to Potulice. It appears from available documents that 512 Soviet children, including 156 under eight years of age, were staying in the camp on April 18, 1944, but by June 1, 1944, there were only 447 children. Some died and 60 of them stayed outside the camp, in what was called *Aussenkommando*.[37] On August 3, 1944, 433 Soviet children left the camp on lorries bound for Nakło. The destinies of these children could not be traced. They were probably sent to the camp at Konstantynów near Łódź (*Ostjugendverwahrlager*). At the beginning of 1944 as many as 3,162 little prisoners stayed in the camp. A total of some 25,000 displaced and interned persons passed through it. Data have been preserved relating to the number of children aged up to five who died in the Potulice camp as a result of the conditions prevailing there, from December 1, 1941, to January 20, 1945.[38]

Year	aged up to 5
1941	48
1942	243
1943	142
1944	144
1945	6
Total:	583

Starvation was one of the reasons for the spread of diseases. In addition, during the evacuation of the camp the escort killed 21 children aged eight to 12 in the vicinity of Więcbork by shooting.

A similar exterminating role was performed by the camp at Smukała near Bydgoszcz. It existed from September 1, 1941, to February 20, 1943. A total of more than 4,000 persons passed through that camp. Whole families of displaced farmers were imprisoned there. There were many children among the expellees.

After the prisoners arrived in the camp a selection was made: juveniles and adults aged 14 to 60, able to work, were deported to forced labour, while the sick, old people and women with children were retained in the camp.

The prisoners lived in three factory storehouses, a tool shed and in a cowshed, and slept on a concrete floor. The babies received a cup of skimmed milk once a week. Bad hygienic conditions and hunger caused a high mortality which went up dramatically in the winter of 1942 as a result of an epidemic of typhoid fever and the refusal to allow children to be sent to hospital in Bydgoszcz. A total of 700 persons died, including 140 children under two years of age.[39]

Many camps designed by the invader for the displaced Polish population are connected with the history of the younger generation. It is impossible to enumerate all of them. The destiny of children in the resettlement camps or — as they are sometimes described — transit camps, was similar. To understand what expulsion was for children, let us trace their fate in certain camps.

The camp for displaced persons at Toruń was situated in four buildings and basements of a former lard factory. Officially the camp was called *Umsiedlungslager Thorn,* popularly known as "Lard Camp". In the period from March 1941 to July 1943 some 20,000 persons passed through the camp. Men built air-raid shelters, and water containers, and women and children over 12 worked on farms. Hunger, awful sanitary conditions and hard work led to sickness and disease on a mass scale. A "racial" commission also operated there. After examinations in the camp, it sent persons who were recognized as "racially valuable" to Germanization camps. After the camp was liquidated in July 1943 the prisoners were sent to the Potulice camp.[40]

The camp at Działdowo was set up by the Wehrmacht in October 1939. From December 1939 to May 1940 the camp was called *Zivilinterniertenlager* (camp for interned civilians) and next *Durchgangslager* (transit camp). Displaced families from the Ciechanów and Płock counties and also from the Białystok region stayed there [41].

In Pomerania there was also a camp for displaced persons at Garczyn, near a lake, set up early in 1940. This changed in character. Originally it was a prisoner-of-war camp, next a resettlement camp, and

at the last stage of its existence it was a Germanization camp destined mainly for Kashubian youth.[42]

In November 1939 boys over 15, from the resettlement camp at Gniew, Gdańsk voivodship, were sent to the camp at Nowy Port near Gdańsk. Only families with small children remained at Gniew. When the camp was liquidated in February 1940 some of the displaced persons were deported to the General Government, one group to the Potulice camp and to the camp located in a former mental hospital at Prabuty near Iława, the rest to forced labour in the Third Reich.[43]

Nazi nationality plans provided for the largest number of people to be expelled from the *Warthegau*. On Sunday, November 5, 1939, in occupied Poznań the news spread that the Germans had begun mass arrests. What was unusual was that whole families were taken into custody. After a few days it turned out that this was the beginning of a mass eviction. The evicted were dispatched to a camp in Główna Street in the Poznań-Wschód quarter.[44]

The eviction was generally carried out during the night. SS and police units entered homes unexpectedly and the inhabitants were given only few minutes to pack their things. They were allowed to take only personal belongings and a little food. People were treated brutally, they were beaten, kicked, their luggage was searched.

The improvised camp was situated in old barrack huts formerly used as military storehouses, deprived of all the necessary installations. It was surrounded by barbed wire and watch-towers. At first families were placed together, later men were separated from women and children.

The living conditions in the camp were particularly difficult for children. They slept on a concrete floor strewn with a little straw or — in certain barracks — on beds of boards without bedlinen. In the reminiscences of those who passed through the camp in Główna Street we find descriptions of the living and sanitary conditions in the barracks. Barrack 4, for instance, was a huge shed 170 m long and 30 m wide. The room was draughty and the four stoves there did not heat it much, for the supply of coal was only one and a half pails per stove for 24 hours.

The camp in Główna Street was liquidated at the end of May 1940. Some 30,000 inhabitants of Poznań, about one third of them children, passed through it[45]. Many photographs of the camp have been preserved. They show with stark realism the inside of the barracks, the serving of meals and work within the camp area. Children's faces visible everywhere indicate how many of them there were in the camp.

There were also a number of lesser known camps for Polish families expelled together with their children in Great Poland, for instance at

Cerekwica, Chodzież, Kazimierz Biskupi, Komorowo, Gniezno and Turek.

In January 1940 the Central Resettlement Office organized a camp for displaced persons at Konstantynów near Łódź. From April 1944 to early January 1945 this was a camp for Russian children who were recognized as "lending themselves to Germanization". In the first period the camp held displaced families from the Łódź and Poznań voivodships, including babies and children. The average number of inmates was 800 including 150 to 250 children. The camp was situated in old factory premises unsuitable for such a large number of people. Men, women and children stayed together in one room. Mortality — particularly among the youngest prisoners — was high. After the resettlement camp was reorganized into a camp for Russian children (*Ost-Jugendverwahrlager der Sicherheitspolizei*), the Germans detained there mainly children from Byelorussia and the Ukraine considered "to lend themselves to Germanization". In August 1944 as many as 1,148 children including 514 boys and 634 girls were held there.

Łódź was the town where the Central Resettlement Office and many camps were situated; *Sammellager I* was in Żeligowskiego street, *Sammellager II* in Strzelców Kaniowskich street where, among others, Czech children from Lidice and Lezaki were placed. There was a transit camp in 6 Sierpnia street while the central resettlement camp was situated in Łąkowa street. The latter, organized in January 1940, was liquidated in 1944. Transports of expellees from Pomerania, Kuyavia, Great Poland as well as the city and voivodship of Łódź passed through this camp, which performed the role of a registration and distribution centre. Preliminary "racial examinations" and examination aimed at establishing the inmates' fitness for work were also carried out there. Children considered "racially valuable" were sent to the camp in Sporna street for detailed examination. The others were placed in the camp in Żeligowskiego street, where they waited for a transport to the Reich for forced labour. Women with children, old, sick and disabled people and other persons unfit for work often stayed there many months awaiting deportation to the General Government.

The living conditions in the camp were exceptionally hard. The factory premises were unsuitable as accommodation and yet an average of some 700 persons were housed there. There was a shortage of beds, people slept on cement floors, the rooms were so crowded that it was possible to sleep only by turns. In spite of severe frost the rooms were unheated, the building had no main drainage and there was no water for washing. In winter people washed in snow in the courtyard.

At first there was no kitchen in the camp. In the winter of 1940 the displaced persons, among whom babies and children represented a substantial percentage, obtained only cold food. The daily ration was made

Evictions

Gendarmes carrying out a pacification campaign in the Zamość area

An album of the NSDAP Żywiec County organization kept in the archives of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, contains photographs dealing with the expulsion of the Polish population from the Żywiec area

Such was the fate of thousands of Polish villages and towns. The evicted Polish population were deprived of their homes and property

The expulsion of Polish population from the Łódź area

People being expelled from the Radom district

A rallying point at Sól

All their possessions

Yet another transport to the Łódź camp under the supervision of the SS and police

People being expelled from the Żywiec area

Poles being expelled from the Kutno area

A rallying point for those expelled at Szczebrzeszyn, Lublin voivodship

Arrival at the camp in Łódź

In a barrack of the central resettlement camp in Łódź

The property of those expelled was subject to control

Officers of the Race and Settlement Head Office carry out an inspection and selection of adults and children

The central resettlement depot in Łódź. Their future destiny depended on the decision of "experts in race affairs"

Preliminary survey by the police at the Łódź camp

A resettlement camp for Poles in Główna street in Poznań

Children working in the resettlement camp in Główna street in Poznań

up of half a loaf of bread, bitter black coffee substitute and a thin fatless soup of turnips or beetroot. No parcels could be delivered into the camp, and attempts to procure food illegally — even for babies — were strictly prohibited. Epidemics of scarlet fever, measles, pneumonia and meningitis spread throughout the camp. Ten to fifteen children died there each day. After sereval week long stay in the camp, the emaciated families, together with their small children, were often taken to the railway station at night, in severe frost. There they were loaded into freight cars and deported to the General Government. The cars were in principle unheated, even if the temperature was minus 30 degrees centigrade. Under these conditions the death-rate during transportation was very high, particularly among children.[46]

The expulsion campaigns were engraved upon the memory of the youngest as ghastly scenes of brutal treatment undertaken by the "supermen" who in the course of several minutes deprived families of their homes and belongings and doomed them to a life of misery.

There was still one more expulsion — after the suppression of the Warsaw uprising. More than 500,000 inhabitants were expelled from the city. Among those doomed to leave their homes were small infants, older children and young people who had fought in the uprising. Hundreds of articles have been written about the participation of children and youngsters in the Warsaw uprising. Young people performed the difficult and responsible role of liaison officers, news-vendors, observers and first-aid attendants. Warsaw children fought and died with arms in their hands. After the fall of the uprising those who survived were deported to concentration camps. Many of them died.

The largest transit and assembly camp for Warsaw's civilian population was situated at Pruszków. It was organized in 13 rooms of the former railway repairshops there. The population evacuated from Warsaw occupied nine rooms. From August 6, to October 30, 1944, more than 650,000 people passed through the camp, including 550,000 from Warsaw and 100,000 from nearby localities (Anin, Wawer, Zielonka, Kobyłka, Tłuszcz, Łomianki, Młociny, Bemowo, Włochy and Jelonki). An average of 50,000 persons stayed in the camp and on September 1 and 2, 1944, after the fall of the uprising in Warsaw's Old Town about 75,000. These were families with children. These people, often driven on foot, were utterly exhausted physically and mentally, particularly the children. Persons unable to work — mainly mothers with children, pregnant women, the sick and the disabled — were deported to various localities in the General Government while those fit for work were dispatched to the Reich for forced labour.

Some families with children were sent to concentration camps: Auschwitz, Stutthof, Gross-Rosen and Ravensbrück. After the Warsaw uprising a group of boys was brought to the prisoner-of-war camp at Łam-

binowice. At first the people arriving in the camp received no food. Later coffee substitute and bread were supplied. Children were dying in great numbers in the camp: on one day only, September 3, 1944, eight babies died in one room.

In the autumn of 1944 a group of some 400 women with children was brought to Wrocław. They were imprisoned at a camp in the present Partyzantów street in the Sempólno quarter, at Sołtysowice and at Zakrzów near the paper factory there. Because of the bad conditions, cold and hunger, children fell ill in great numbers. Sick children were taken to hospital — on the pretext of medical treatment — but none of them returned later to their parents.

One day the camp authorities detailed 20 women to work. As they had no footwear they refused to go and were, therefore, arrested. They left 21 children, the youngest of whom was six months old.[47]

A total of 2,478,000 Poles were affected by the Nazi expulsion campaigns.

6. THE TRAGEDY OF THE ZAMOŚĆ REGION CHILDREN

The atrocities committed against children of the Zamość region were among the most horrible Nazi crimes committed during the Second World War.

The plan to expel the Polish population from the Lublin district with a view to creating a "bastion" of the Third Reich in the East, was worked out in the autumn of 1941. By way of trial, from November 6 to 25, 1941, the Germans expelled the Polish population from several villages situated in the then Zamość county. Afterwards the Germans began to work out guidelines and instructions that were to regulate the way in which the campaign was to be carried out. At that time a branch office of the Łódź Central Resettlement Office was organized at Zamość (*Umwandererzentralstelle Litzmannstadt — Zweigstelle Zamość*). Resettlement camps were set up at Zamość, Zwierzyniec and Budzyń. There were also projects to set up a special camp for children at Włodawa. According to the guidelines, Polish peasants were to be evicted from their farms in the fertile Lublin agricultural region and their property was to be handed over to German settlers.

The large-scale expulsion-cum-pacification campaign in the Zamość region began during the night of November 28, 1942, with the eviction of the inhabitants of Skierbieszów and nearby villages.

Stanisława Teresa Syska, who was 10 years old when evicted from Skierbieszów, thus recollects the experience:

They began to rap at the windows and the doors. Chattering in German proved that we were surrounded and there was no escape for us. At that moment I realized, though I was a child, the immensity of the horror and misfortune befalling us... I also had ready a package (in which I had a doll) but when the Germans rushed into the dwelling they gave us only five minutes to prepare and to take some things and immediately pushed us out of the house, disregarding the weeping of children and the requests of our parents. My parents thus took only bundles with bedding because it was already very cold...[48]

This was the situation until the beginning of March 1943, when the Nazi authorities stopped the expulsion, in order to resume it, this time under the slogan of "fighting gangs". It went on from the first days of June 1943, until August 1943.

In the night or in the early morning the Nazis surrounded a village and drove its inhabitants out of their homes, allowing them to take neither their property nor personal belongings. Those resisting were murdered, others — already from resettlement camps where a selection had been made — were sent to concentration camps or to forced labour in factories and on farms in the Reich. Children and old people were at first deported to other villages in the General Government.

The practice of expulsion as applied to the population of the Zamość region — like the conditions prevailing in the resettlement camps — did not differ in any respect from the measures taken against the Polish population in the regions incorporated into the Reich. In the Zamość region children were, however, affected more severely. For with the shortage of manpower in the Reich growing in intensity, attempts were made to secure every pair of working hands. Thus mothers were separated from their children who were left under the care of older children or old people.

The Zamość camp has engraved itself particularly on children's memory. Set up on November 27, 1942, it existed till January 19, 1944. People were brought to the camp in waggons, lorries or carts, and if the distance did not exceed a dozen or so kilometres, they were driven on foot. The camp was composed of about a dozen barrack huts surrounded with barbed wire. After the expellees arrived in the camp they went through what was called racial selection. Next children were separated from their parents. The former were placed in the worst barracks, the so-called horse barracks 9a, 9b, 16 and 17. These were dirty, moist huts where water dripped down the walls. Barracks 9a and 9b had no bunks or straw, and children lay on the ground there, mostly in mud. The other barracks had bunks but no straw. In the camp children died on a mass scale from hunger, cold and bad sanitary conditions. 199 children died in the period from December 1942 to April 1943. The highest death-toll — 115 children — was in January 1943.[49]

Leonard Szpuga, a farmer from Topólcza, testified:

At that time I saw with my own eyes how the Germans separated children from their mothers. This separation of mothers from their infants was what shocked me most. The severest tortures I suffered were nothing compared to this sight. The Germans took the children, and in case of any resistance, even the slightest, they whipped both mothers and children till blood was drawn. Then the whimpering and crying of the unfortunate resounded in the camp. Sometimes mothers approached the Germans with a request for food for their hungry and frozen children. The only thing they could obtain was a lash or a blow with a stick. I saw Germans kill little children ... The hygienic conditions were dreadful. Lice, dirt, fleas, bugs simply devoured people alive.[50]

"I sneaked through to feed my child. The Greman first wanted to shoot me, later he ordered me to raise a hand and to swear that I renounced my child," relates Leokadia Szykua of Ruszów.[51]

SS-Unterscharführer Artur Schütz, called by children "Ne", was a terror to them. He committed many individual murders, both on adults and on children and, besides, he beat and tortured children and set dogs on them. In the summer of 1943 he was appointed commandant of the resettlement camp at Zwierzyniec where he also committed murders, particularly on children.[52]

An average of more than 1,000 children were held at the Zamość camp at any one time. A total of some 100,000 persons passed through it, about one fifth of them children.

Still worse were the conditions for children at the transit camp at Zwierzyniec which existed from December 1942 to the autumn of 1943. A total of more than 24,000 persons including some 6,000 children passed through it.[53]

Camps for displaced persons from the Lublin region also existed at Biłgoraj, Budzyń, Frampol, in Lublin in Krochmalna street, in Majdan Stary, in the Solska Forest, at Tarnogród, and Wola Derezieńska.

The fate of the Zamość region children was particularly tragic. As many as 4,454 children aged two to 14 were carried away to the Reich for the purpose of Germanization. In January 1943 the Germans began to dispatch the children, who up to that time were held at camps in the Zamość region, to other districts. They were transported by train, in freight cars, without food and adequate clothes. Many children died of cold and hunger.

Certain transports were sent to localities near Warsaw and to Warsaw where, once the tragedy of the Zamość children became known, so-called tutelary circles were created which brought aid to children. Włodzimierz Januszewski thus testified in the Gdańsk Regional Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland in 1968:

In the spring of 1943 the Germans sold Zamość children for 150 to 300 zlotys each. When the news spread in the town and great numbers of Poles began to apply for children, the Germans interrupted the sale...

To secure railway transport for Poles expelled from the Zamość region, the head of the Łódź Central Resettlement Office Hermann Krumey approached the General Management of the Eastern Railway in Cracow. He thus wrote on January 22, 1943:

In connection with the current settlement of Germans in the Zamość district, the Central Resettlement Office has the duty to prepare an appropriate number of dwellings and workshops there.

Poles will be expelled and put in a camp at Zamość. A selection of those able to work will be carried out there and those fit will be sent to appropriate work. Children, old people and persons who are unfit for work will be placed in so-called pensioner villages in the Radom and Warsaw districts.

Please prepare two railway transports, for 1,000 persons each, in the week from January 24 to 30, to carry these people to their destination. If an adequate number of passenger carriages is not available, I agree that from a half to two thirds should be freight waggons. Please also attach three closed waggons to be used for luggage. The town of Siedlce would be the destination of the first transport, and Niemojki near Siedlce of the second transport.

I emphasize the urgent need to supply railway transport because the Zamość camp is overfilled at present.[54]

Different was the fate of those children who together with their parents were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp. After being separated from their parents they were murdered in that camp, either in gas chambers or with phenol injections. The German camp physician who prepared false death certificates for Mieczysław Rycaj of Wola Złocka, born on May 3, 1930, and Radeusz Rycyk of Litaniec, born on October 9, 1933, stated that these boys had died of natural causes: the first of tonsillitis, the second of pneumonia.[55]

The Majdanek concentration camp also held children under indescribable conditions in the camp; lonely, hungry, often sick, children died there in great numbers.

A total of 110,000 Poles including some 30,000 children were expelled from the Zamość region.[56]

7. TERROR, EXECUTIONS, REPRISALS

"Do not spare Poland," read Hitler's order preceding the Nazi aggression against our country.

Terror and executions of children began immediately after the first Nazi hordes had crossed the borders.

At dawn on September 1, 1939, the German armed forces, in a simultaneous strike by the army, the air force and the navy, attacked the Polish frontiers. Crimes against children were committed on the very first day of the war. This is exemplified by the following fact: a Wehrmacht unit which had entered the village of Wyszanów in the Kępno county, having shot two inhabitants, murdered another 14 persons, including children, by throwing grenades into the cellar of one of the houses. The front line was advancing rapidly, leaving behind numerous casualties among the civilian population.

The extremely difficult strategic situation, the unfavourable configuration of the frontier and the numerical and technical superiority of the enemy made effective defence impossible for the Polish forces. As the Polish army collapsed as an organized armed force, the resistance against the aggressor did not cease. It was taken up by, amongst others, the civilian population, including young people, and the war took on the form of a nationwide defensive struggle.

The annals of history have recorded the defence by boy scouts of the Zorza cinema in Katowice, the struggle of boy and girl scouts in Katowice's Kościuszko Park, the participation of boy scouts in the defence of Pszczyna and other Polish towns. A relation by Werner Kluck, a non-commissioned officer in the German Fourth Armoured Division, concerning the attack on September 9, presents an anonymous hero of the defence of Warsaw. Kluck writes:

> We have stopped near a wooden fence. A Polish gun is firing nearby; we must find it... All of a sudden I see a young boy jump out of a window in one of the houses. He is in the middle between our vehicle and the other. Though he is still a child, 13 years old perhaps, he is wearing a Polish officer's uniform. He does not see us and is running, holding a bottle with incendiary liquid which he is going to throw at the others. Johann (the machine-gunner) is faster, though; he is already firing at him from his gun. The boy spreads his arms to the sides but he still takes a few steps forward. He falls onto the ground close to the tank; the liquid that has spilled from the bottle explodes on the armour in a bright flame.[57]

For their participation in the defence of the motherland, boy and girl scouts from Katowice and other Upper Silesian localities paid with their lives. For the invading German troops murdered the civilian population, in the first place the defenders, those who fought for the presevation of Poland's independence. Murders were committed by the Wehrmacht, by special police forces which followed in its wake, as well as by paramilitary organizations and local Germans, former Polish citizens, who possessed concealed weapons.

In the evening of September 2, 1939, a German tank column was approaching the town of Pszczyna. The last defenders: veterans of the

Silesian uprisings and boy and girl scouts, were keeping vigil there. On September 4, members of the *Freikorps Ebbinghaus* organization executed 17 defenders of the town in the Three Oaks Park, among them boy scouts from the Pszczyna secondary schools.[58]

Another tragedy followed the response by the Polish population in Bydgoszcz on Sunday, September 3, to the fire opened by German infiltrators at the retreating Polish columns. After capturing the town, the Germans killed a number of boy scouts in the first executions.

It has been established that during the 55 days of the military administration in the occupied Polish territories, beginning on September 1, 1939, 112 children under 14 years of age were executed, and this number is not final. Most killings took place in the Katowice, Łódź, Kielce, Bydgoszcz and Poznań voivodships. The most frequent form of murder was shooting (60.2 per cent); next came death by grenades, burning alive and bayonets. More than half of the murdered children ranged in age from seven to 14 years, and 40 per cent were from one to six years old. There were also instances of killing infants under one year of age. According to the available data, a total of 124,640 civilians were murdered in that period, among them 1,006 children, 96 infants and 1,737 persons under age.[59]

The Nazis subjected Polish children and young people to direct and indirect, group and individual extermination. Polish youngsters, just like adults or together with them, were to be executed until the last days of the occupation.

The Nazis recognized family ties not in the generally accepted meaning, but in the aspect of "family responsibility" (*Sippenhaftung*). This responsibility embraced all members of the family, regardless of age. The principle of family responsibility was first applied at the end of 1939 in the *Warthegau* and later extended to the whole territory of Poland and the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Belgium.

On September 16, 1941, Keitel issued an order concerning hostages. Similar orders were contained in the guidelines of August 23, 1941, for the Wehrmacht's behaviour in the occupied territories of the USSR and in a document of December 16, 1942, concerning methods of combatting the partisan movement. On the basis of these guidelines the Nazis committed many crimes, including crimes against children and youth. "The army is ... authorized and obliged to apply in the struggle against the partisan movement all measures without any restrictions, even towards women and children if this is the only effective method." Keitel ordered.[60] Carrying this order into practice, on February 28, 1944, the Nazis burnt down completely the village of Wanaty near Garwolin and murdered its inhabitants, among them children between two months and 16 years of age. The 108 victims of the killing included a two-

month-old girl, a one-and-a-half-month-old boy, and 33 children under 16 years of age [61].

In many Polish villages the parents were murdered together with their children. On February 2, 1944, for example, the Nazis killed 98 persons, including 39 children, in Wólka Szczecka in the Lublin region. Ochotnica, a village which owing to its unyielding stand, was called by the Germans a "Polnische Republik", was pacified on Christmas Eve of 1944. Fifty-three inhabitants of the village were killed, including infants. The fine monument erected there after the war, representing a mother holding a baby, is by no means only an artistic allegory. It depicts the fate of Maria Kawalcowa, of the hamlet of Młynne, who riddled by bullets, froze holding her young baby in her arms.

A heavy toll of children's lives was taken by pacification operations in the Białystok region. Let us mention some by way of example: on June 23, 1941, 38 persons, including seven children, were murdered during the pacification of the village of Saczkowice; on June 25 of that year 47 inhabitants, among them two children, were killed in the village of Słochy Annopolskie; on June 16, 1942, the Nazis burnt down the village of Rajsk and murdered 149 persons. According to the evidence of eye-witnesses, the population was gathered in the square in front of the Orthodox church. The children, ranging in age from 12 to 14, were ordered onto trucks and taken in an unknown direction. It was later found out that they were sent as forced labourers chiefly to the territory of Prussia. The men and women without children were driven outside the village, where they were shot. Women with children under 12 years of age were dropped one kilometre away from the village and forbidden to return. In the meantime, the village was set on fire.[62]

On July 13, 1943, 49 persons, including 16 children, were murdered during the pacification of the village of Sikory-Tomkowięta. Women with small children were the first to be executed. On July 16, 1943, in one of the largest extermination operations, the village of Krasowo-Częstki was destroyed and its 257 inhabitants, among them over 60 children, were shot. On August 7, 1944, the Nazis pacified the villages of Dzierwany, Kleszczówka and Krzywe, murdering children as well. The survivors have vivid memories of the executions, fires and ashes. Franciszek Wysocki, then a boy of ten, thus recalls the pacification of his village of Potok Stary near Janów Lubelski [63].

They are marching in fours, each four with their hands tied with rope at the back. They are marching slowly, almost majestically; nobody is crying. Right behind the column are crowded a large group of women and children. They are the mothers, wives, sisters and children who are seeing off their loved ones. The procession makes the impression of an unusual funeral cortège. The women and children are wailing; sounds of weeping and laments are everywhere; even the

dogs in the yards are howling instead of barking. All of a sudden, a seven-year-old girl runs up to her father before the Nazis can stop her. The child tries to free the father's hands from the fetters, but to no avail. One of the Nazis forcibly detaches the daughter from the father and throws her into the roadside ditch.

Throughout the Nazi occupation of Poland, children and young people were persecuted and murdered with inhuman stubbornness. For example, in November 1939 in the Połędzki Forest near Poznań, 70 students, prisoners of Fort VII, were killed during a mass execution which took the toll of 34,098 human lives, among them children, young people and the elderly.[64]

Children were among the witnesses of executions. In Warsaw's Polish Army Museum, there is kept a small bottle showing traces of dried blood. A piece of paper attached to it, written in awkward childish hand, says: "This is the blood of people executed by the Nazis in Warsaw, at the corner of Jagiellońska and Wrzesińska streets, on November 23, 1943". The blood was collected by 12-year-old Zygmunt Walkowski.

During the Warsaw Uprising, the percentage of children over two months of age shot or burnt alive in various periods and circumstances, ranged from ten to 75 per cent of all those killed. There were instances of the Nazis murdering six-month-old infants, women with babies and babies in prams.

Putting on a show of omnipotence and ruthless terror was one of the methods used by the Nazis to maintain their hold in occupied Poland. All this gave rise to resistance and rebellion and aroused the will to fight even in the youngest ones.

8. CHILDREN IN NAZI PRISONS

As a result of arrests, deportations, executions and confinement in various camps of their parents and relations, or just their illness or inability to work, many children were compelled to make their own living. The older ones sometimes kept their younger brothers and sisters, or even adult members of their families who were unable to provide for themselves.

The "loitering" children — as the Nazi administration described them — usually ran the streets in search of bread or to earn some money. The responsibility for this situation rested with the invader, since the food rations allotted to the Poles condemned them to starvation. Besides, many children were accused of "loitering" solely because they were of Polish nationality.

Leaving aside the question of the observance by the occupying forces of the laws in force in the occupied state (Art. 43 of the Fourth Hague Convention) and the prohibition against introducing changes in the legal

status of the territory under occupation, it should be bore in mind that the Third Reich's legislation provided for the exercise of public care over minors exclusivelly by youth bureaux and public guardians.

The German penal law was extended to the annexed territories by a decree of June 6, 1940, and was applied to the Polish population. At the close of that year, however, the head of the RuSHA Reinhard Heydrich put forward the concept of enacting a separate law for the Poles "until the purification of nationality relations", since the law in force had ceased to be an efficient instrument of extermination. At the same time, he said, it was inadmissible that Germans and Poles should be tried by the same courts. Reinhard Heydrich was backed by Hitler's deputy Martin Bormann, who argued that the Führer had demanded that the new eastern districts be Germanized within 10 years, irrespective of the methods applied. In Martin Bormann's concept, the law for the Polish population was to be confined to a "few provisions which should be worded so as to make it possible to interpret any act on the part of Poles as an act against the law"; courts for Poles were similar to summary police courts.[65]

The Reich's Minister of Justice, taking into consideration Bormann's suggestions, also introduced in the draft law for the Poles the institution of penal camps (*Straflager*) with hard labour, eliminating at the same time appeals procedures and the swearing in of Polish witnesses and rendering court judgments immediately enforceable.

Ultimately, the special penal law of December 4, 1941, concerning Poles and Jews in the entire territory of the Reich was put into force on January 1, 1942, though it was also applicable to acts committed before that date. The law provided for equal punishment to adults and minors.

After the procedural reform, the martial penal law of the Third Reich was further extended in the years 1942-45. A decree of July 23, 1942, finally excluded cases of Polish youngsters and Jews from the jurisdiction of the juvenile courts. These cases were tried by courts for adult persons, and the juveniles served their terms in normal prisons.[66]

A new, extensive law enacted on November 6, 1943 (and promulgated four days later), came into force on January 1, 1944, and was retroactvie. It affected juveniles of 14 to 18 years of age and was also binding in the annexed territories. The law provided that minors under 14 years of age were excluded from criminal responsibility, except juveniles who were over 12 years of age at the moment of committing an act against the "protection of the nation", who were to be treated as minors over 14. It should be added that even this age limit was often not respected with regard to Polish children.

Polish children and young people were confined in both police and court prisons. According to the available documents, there were more boys than girls among the juvenile prisoners. Girls were often detained

instead of their parents who were not at home, whereas boys frequently appeared as the actual defendants. The arrests affected the children of farmers in arrears with compulsory deliveries, children engaging in trade whose financial situation compelled them to make their own living, children violating the orders of the Nazi authorities by entering a park or play-ground reserved for Germans. The grounds for arrests were manifold. A separate category included juveniles working with the resistance movement and children of parents active in the struggle against the invader.

The transition from living at large to prison conditions was the hardest moment for the children. They would spend days and at times weeks at police stations, where they were treated with refined cruelty. The Nazis applied the same methods to them as they did toward adults: starvation, beatings, intimidation.

Tadeusz Młynarczykowski, then a boy of 12, thus describes his arrest in Dębica in 1942:

> In my family, my sister was first deported to Germany for forced labour; then my eldest brother followed. And when he escaped, unwilling to work for the Bauer merely for paltry food, and was hiding... they came to my school and took me from the classroom. I was put in the Dębica prison, where another three children were confined... We were next taken to the police station, where nobody told us why we had been detained; they only took our finger-prints and photographed us. Then we were marched back to the prison. In front of the prison building, I saw my mother, who wanted to give me a pair of stockings. However, when I tried to take the package from my mother, I was slapped across the face by a Gestapo man and next kicked and pushed into the prison door.[67]

The boy was later imprisoned in Tarnów, where, as he recalls, about 15 children were confined, and then in the children's camp in Łódź.

Children were detained and murdered in such prisons as the Pawiak in Warsaw, the Montelupi in Cracow, the Castle in Lublin, the Rotunda in Zamość, in the Mysłowice prison, in the prison on Młyńska street and in Fort VII in Poznań and in Fort VII in Toruń. Below is some information based on testimony by witnesses and German sources.

The prison in Mysłowice (*Ersatz-Polizei-Gefängnis in Myslovitz*) was established in July 1940 and liquidated on January 26, 1945. Many children were imprisoned there, particularly after Operation *Oderberg* carried out in Silesia on August 11 and 12, 1943, which aimed at the extermination of whole Polish families. The number of the children detained during the operation, sent to Mysłowice and later transferred to Potulice, is estimated at about 200. They included infants of several months to two years of age. The adults and children over 16 were sent to concentration camps, while the younger children were directed to the camp

on Przemysłowa street in Łódź. In one consignment only, 73 children were transferred from Mysłowice to the Łódź camp. All in all about 20,000 persons passed through the prison camp in Mysłowice, and about 90 per cent of them later perished. Children constituted a large proportion of this number.[68]

The prison in Zamość, the so-called Zamość Rotunda, was one of the many sites which saw the martyrdom of Polish children. From October 1939 until June 1940 it was the scene of mass murders — mainly of the Polish intelligentsia. Later, until the winter of 1943, the prison served as a resettlement camp for the displaced people of the Zamość region, while in the last period of the occupation it was an investigation prison. Altogether, some 50,000 prisoners passed through the Zamość Rotunda, about 10 per cent of them being children. The prison was the scene of mass executions of children. The Nazis shot among others 36 boys scouts. and a group of boys wearing school uniforms who had been brought by two trucks. While being marched to the place of execution, they sang the Polish national anthem: "Poland has not yet perished...".

In the Montelupi prison in Cracow, where a total of over 20,000 persons were confined, there was a special cell for children under ten. Seventy children were kept in it on average. Thence they were sent to various concentration camps and shot.

In Toruń's Fort VII prison 30 scouts ranging in age from 13 to 16 were executed in the spring of 1942. In Fort VII in Poznań even three-year-old children were imprisoned.

There were also children among the prisoners of the Warsaw Pawiak. About 30 were born in the prison cells. The juveniles included children arrested with their whole families, children detained instead of their parents as well as children arrested for subversive activites. Their destinies varied. Most were taken to the concentration camps in Auschwitz, Majdanek and Ravensbrück. Only few were released. Two girls aged eight and ten were imprisoned at Pawiak as hostages. In 1943 a six-month-old boy named Januszek was held there in the place of his parents. The baby was treated as a prisoner; his name was on all files. Children and young people were also kept in court prisons. The younger children were at times put in juvenile prisons for the German population and so-called kindred races. These were chiefly children regarded as "racially valuable" who had perpetrated an offense according to German law. The Nazi penal institutions in which Polish youth, among others, were kept, were situated in Nowogard, Sztum, Wołów, Grudziądz and Lubawa for boys and in Olsztyn and Malbork for girls.[69]

The investigation of the crimes committed against children in prisons has not yet been completed. New facts and losses resulting from Nazi crimes against Polish young people are still being established.

9. IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND EXTERMINATION CENTRES

The Nazi camps were the scene of extermination and genocide effected through slave labour and mass-scale annihilation. The tragic living conditions in the camps were designed to exterminate the prisoners. Their average daily food ration, given 10 to 12 hours of hard labour, contained 700 to 1,000 calories. The refined system of torture also served the purpose of annihilation.

Concentration camps and extermination centres played a fundamental role in the system of Nazi camps. There were camps for the gradual or immediate annihilation of prisoners. Children were murdered in almost all concentration camps and extermination centres, and in some of them special sections for juveniles existed.

On January 6, 1943, Heinrich Himmler issued a special order stating that "racially worthless boys and girls ought to be turned over as apprentices to the economic units of concentration camps".[70]

The order meant a death sentence for hundreds of thousands of Polish children. For they were sent to concentration camps not in order to work, as Himmler falsely stated, but for extermination.

Juvenile prisoners were put in concentration camps mainly in connection with the arrest and deportation to a camp of their parents, although some of them were imprisoned for cooperation with the resistance movement or as hostages for their fathers or elder brothers fighting in partisan units. Jewish children, together with their families, were sent to concentration camps for annihilation on account of their race alone. Even new-born babies could be found in concentration camps.

The camp authorities rid themselves of children, particularly small children, by all means possible. For they obstructed the maintenance of the normal pace of life in the camp and besides were too small to work. Many children died already on their way to a camp.

Władysław Sakowski, a 17-year-old prisoner of Stutthof, thus describes his journey to the Mauthausen concentration camp:[71]

> The travelling conditions were awful. We were put into freight cars, about 40 to a car, and the cars were locked on the outside. Each of us was issued a triple food ration, but nothing to drink. The journey lasted four days. In effect, about 30 per cent of the prisoners in each car died of hunger, cold, or thirst.

In the camp children's lot was particularly tragic. According to Professor Bertold Epstein of Prague, a former prisoner of the Auschwitz camp, during the selection of children the SS-men placed a bar at the height of 120 cm. The children who walked under the bar were sent to the crematorium. Aware of this, small children stretched themselves out as much as they could in order to be included in the group that

were to remain alive. But even the children who stayed alive following the preliminary selection would not live long under the camp conditions.[72] The barrack huts unheated in the winter and stuffy in the summer, the starvation food rations and the hard labour rapidly emaciated the children's organisms. Many child prisoners died, many were murdered in mass executions, gas chambers, or by phenol injections through the heart. Besides, Nazi physicians in the camps conducted pseudo-medical experiments on children which also resulted in the death of the small prisoners.

* * *

KL Auschwitz in Oświęcim was the largest Nazi concentration camp on Polish territory.

This central concentration camp for the population of Southern Poland and Silesia, along with three camp complexes: the main camp, Brzezinka and Monowice, was, on the one hand, the largest centre of Nazi crimes, the scene of the extermination of four million people: men, women and children from the whole of occupied Europe. On the other hand, it was an arsenal of manpower for the armaments industry of the Third Reich. The first transport of prisoners arrived at the camp in May 1940, and the first transport of Poles on June 14, 1940. It included many young people, but there were no children under 14.

It is impossible to say when the first child was brought to Auschwitz, what its name was, or where it came from.

It is a fact, however, that from 1942 onward children from all countries of occupied Europe were murdered at the camp.

In January 1942 a cottage located within the camp and known as the red cottage, was turned by the camp authorities into a gas chamber. There whole families brought at that time to Brzezinka were murdered by the use of Cyclon B gas, which had first been tested on Soviet prisoners or war (in the basement of Block 11 in September 1941). In chamber no. 1 about 2,500 people were killed daily, and their bodies were buried in mass graves. Later on the bodies were cremated. The unburnt bones of children have confirmed that already at that time children were murdered on a mass scale.

From June 1942 a second gas chamber functioned at the camp, where about 3,000 persons were put to death each day. Among the victims were families with children from Poland, France, Slovakia, Holland and Yugoslavia.

Towards the end of October 1942 there arrived groups of Jews from Czechoslovakia and groups of Polish Jews from the ghettoes in Bia-

łystok, Ciechanów, Płońsk and other towns. It is difficult to establish how many children were among them.

On December 13, 1942, a group of 630 Poles, expelled from the Zamość region, including children, were brought to Auschwitz, and on December 16, 1942, another 88 prisoners arrived from the resettlement camp in Zamość. The children who had arrived in these groups were killed by phenol injections. Stanisław Głowa, a former prisoner of the camp who testified in 1946 at the trial of Rudolf Höss, said:

In the winter of 1942/43 *Rapportführer* Palitsch brought two boys from the Zamość group from the Birkenau camp. He initially put them in Block 11 and on the next day transferred them to Block 20 where Pańczyk needled them [killed them by phenol injections]. Their names were Mieczysław Rycaj and Tadeusz Rycyk. The parents of the two boys, together with their younger brothers and sisters, were gassed. From the whole group only about 90 boys aged eight to fourteen were selected. Rycyk and Rycaj arrived precisely in this group. The rest of them, i.e. about 90 boys, were taken by Palitsch to Block 20, where they were killed by injections by a medical non-commissioned officer, Scherpe.[73]

The action groups of the Security Police operating in the eastern regions, and especially *Einsatzkommando 9*, sent transports of whole families to the camps. Some of them went directly to Auschwitz and others through the Majdanek camp. There were many children in those transports.

The year 1943 saw the arrival at Auschwitz of transports of families from the ghettoes in Będzin, Cracow, Prężany, Sosnowiec and Volkovysk and a transport from Greece.

In September 1943 a so-called family camp (*Familienlager Theresienstadt B II b*) was set up in Birkenau. Next to the Gypsy "family camp", established in February 1943, it was a second "family camp" in which many children were kept. During the liquidation of the Gypsy camp in 1944, all children imprisoned there were put to death.

Bogdan Bartnikowski, who as a child was an Auschwitz prisoner, thus describes these events:

'And where are your folks?' I asked the Gypsy. 'Folks?' he repeated, 'I don't understand.' 'Your parents, family.' 'There,' he said, pointing at the chimney of the crematorium. 'Only we, children, are still alive' ... They are taking the Gypsies away. After some time the crying stopped, for a while there was some movement behind the wall, and finally silence prevailed in the camp... In the morning, when at last we could leave the Block, I ran to have a look at camp B. It was empty, not a single soul...[74]

On August 12, 1944, the first transport of civilians from insurgent Warsaw, from the transit camp in Pruszków, arrived at the camp. It included 1,984 men and boys and 3,175 women and girls. On Septem-

ber 4 another transport arrived from Pruszków, consisting of 1,955 men and boys and 1,131 women and girls; on September 13 there was a third transport with 929 men and boys and about 900 women and girls; and on September a fourth numbering 3,021 men and boys. In October 1944 a group of 370 girls under 14 years of age was brought to Birkenau. Most of them died as a result of the conditions existing in the camp.[75]

The commandant of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, Rudolf Höss, testified: "I do not possess and cannot give any numerical data regarding the children who perished in the camp." [76] It is known, however, that almost each group of prisoners arriving at the camp included children.

Nina Gusiewa, a former Auschwitz prisoner, thus writes in her memoirs:[77]

I remember a young woman holding a three-year-old child, a beautiful girl with fair curls and a blue ribbon bow. The child was holding a puppet with protruding pigtails. The woman had been sent to the camp, and the SS-men began tearing the girl from her. The mother, her eyes wide open and mad with despair, was defending her daughter. Two shots at close quarters and both fell dead on the spot. SS-man Traub's hand did not even tremble when he shot them.

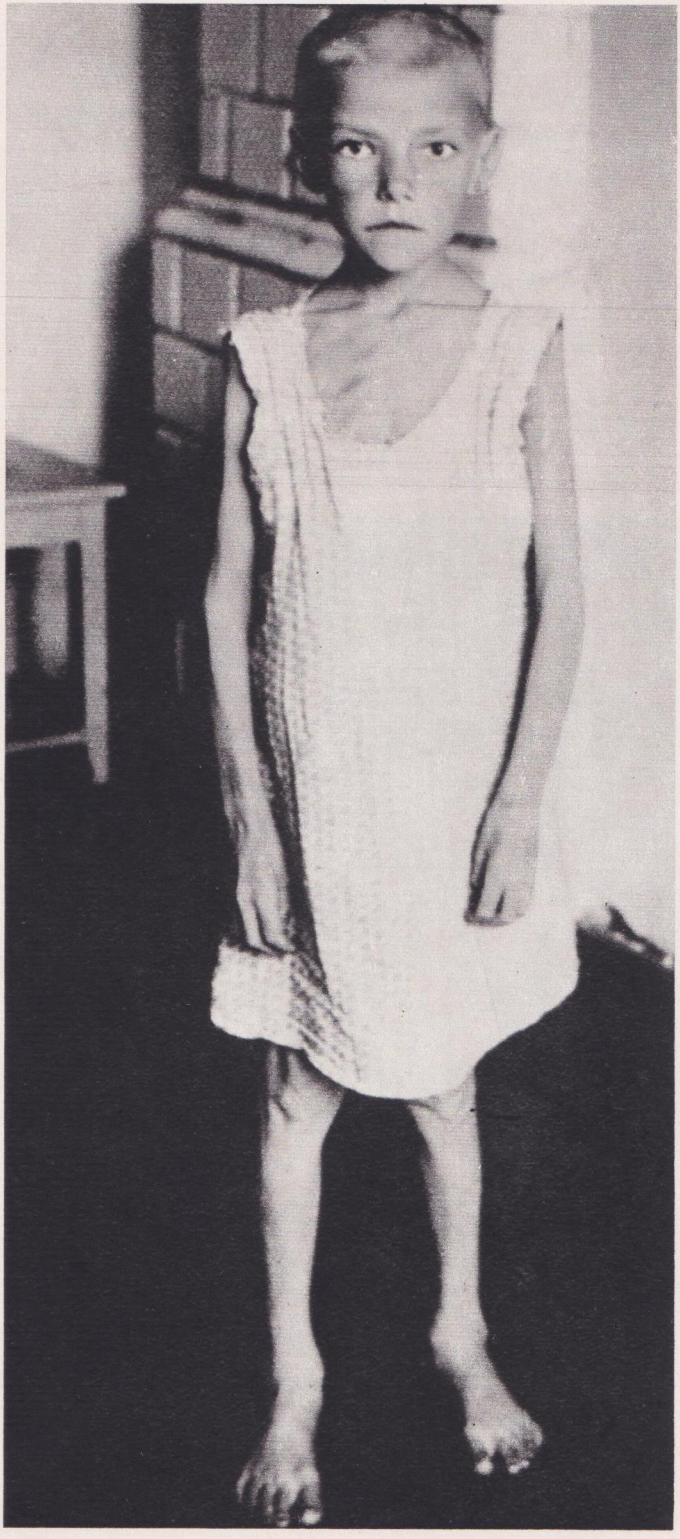
Very little is said about children in the surviving camp documents. A statement of August 30, 1944, concerning prisoner employment reads:[78]

Six hundred and nineteen boys (aged from one month to 14 years) lived in the concentration camp Auschwitz II, of whom 187 stayed in the women's camp B I a, 204 in the men's quarantine camp B II a, 175 in the men's camp B II d, four in the Jewish men's camp B II e and 49 twins destined for experimental purposes in the men's hospital camp B II f.

A separate group of over 300 twin children were handed over to Dr Josef Mengele for experiments. The SS-men first conducted anthropometric measurements and next proceeded to X-ray and morphological examinations and surgical experiments. The latter were extensively described in the testimony of Dr Miklos Nyiszli, who examined the bodies of twins and sent preparations of their organs to the Institute of Anthropology in Berlin. In his work Mengele attempted to find a way for Aryan women to give birth to the largest number of twins. He carefully studied the internal organs of twins, having a unique opportunity in the history of medicine of causing the simultaneous death of the twins. Many geneticists, even Nazis, regarded Mengele's work as senseless and designed only to further his career. On the day of the evacuation of the camp, January 17, 1945, only about 100 twins

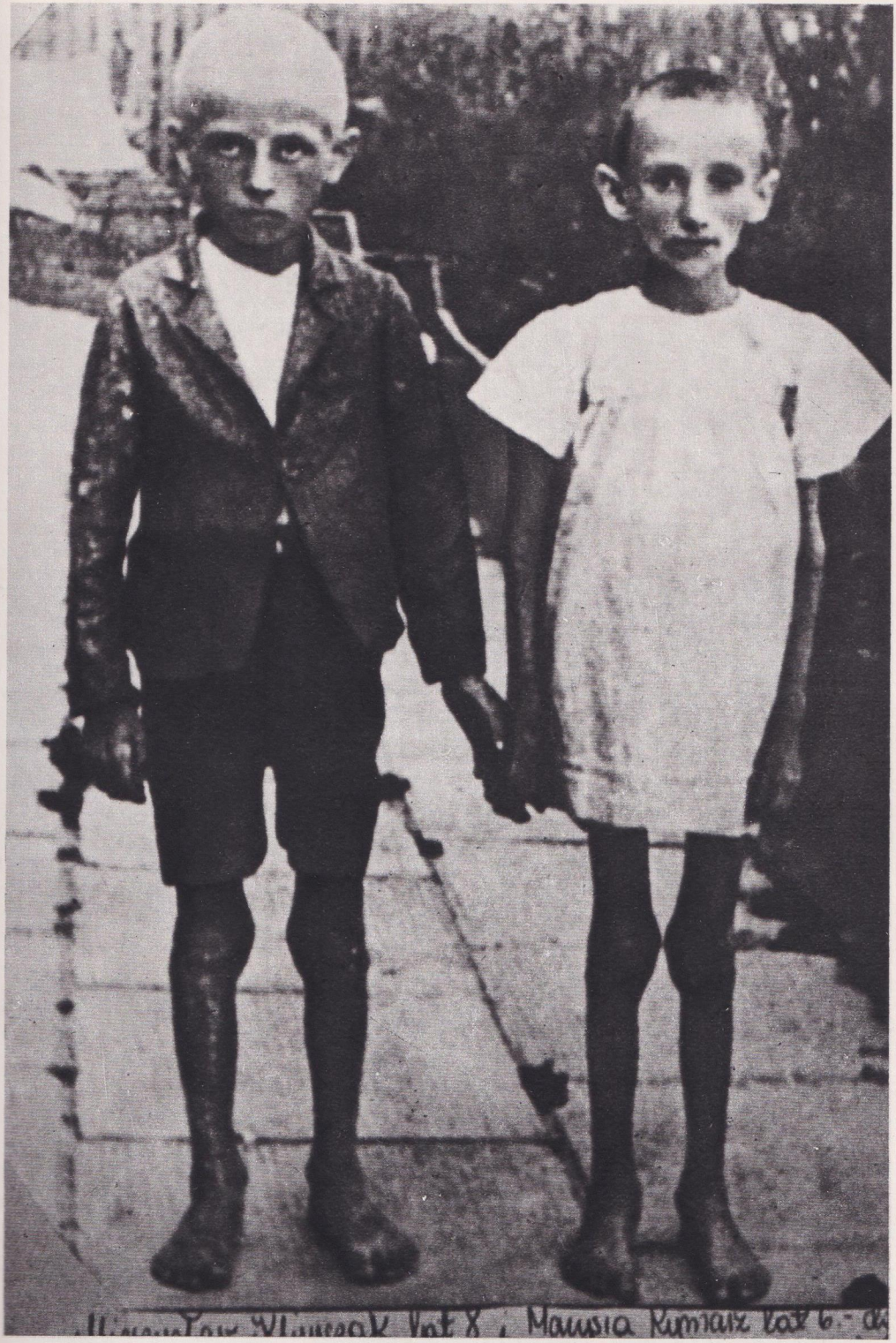
The Tragedy of Zamość Children

Children being taken away from their parents by the German police

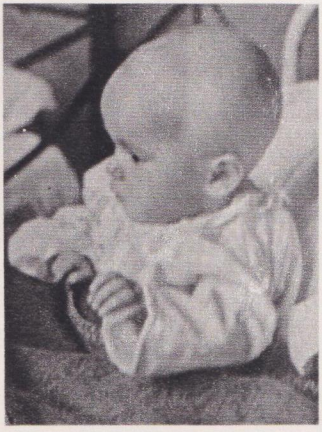


Children saved from transports from Polish villages in the Zamość region pacified by the Germans

When they had been snatched from the freight cars running to Auschwitz or to the Reich they were found to be in a state of general exhaustion



Photographs were taken of the children who were saved in order to make it easier for their parents to recover them in future



A group of children from the Zamość region, saved and placed in a shelter in Warsaw

were alive of the 49 staying in the men's hospital camp B II f and the 300 on whom Mengele had conducted his experiments.

Rudolf Höss testified at his trial that "as a rule small children were killed because they were too young to work", while the older ones were often sent to labour camps.

He also wrote in his autobiography:[79]

Many women hid their babies under piles of clothing. Members of the special units took special notice of this and persuaded women to pick up their children. Women concealed their children because they were afraid the disinfection might be harmful to them. Smaller children usually cried while being undressed in such unusual circumstances, but when the mothers or members of the special unit spoke to them in a friendly way, they grew quiet and, playing or chattering, entered the chambers, toys in their hands. I noticed that the women who sensed or knew what was awaiting them, brought themselves to joke with their children or persuade them gently in the face of mortal fear. One woman came up to me and, pointing at her four children who joined hands to lead the youngest one over the uneven ground, whispered to me: 'How can you brace yourselves to murder these lovely children? Don't you have hearts?' There were mothers who, in order to sooth their children, helped them get undressed with exceptional zeal just to shorten their suffering and fright.

Rudolf Höss next describes how an extraordinary beautiful Jewess with two children undressed them and eagerly helped other mothers with more children to undress them more quickly and enter the gas chamber. She said before going into the chamber that she had intentionally taken her children so that she was not classified as fit for work and separated from them. She wanted to go through all this with her children. There were mothers, however, who tried to push out their children before the door of the chamber closed. These were mostly women who could not believe until the end that their children were facing death. Many of them shouted: "Leave my children alive at least".

Höss writes that there was much commotion and excitement on the unloading platform, while the new arrivals were being divided into those fit for work and children and elderly people who were to be killed immediately. The separation of those able to work aroused suspicion. Most children were unaware of their destiny. They often went into the gas chambers smiling or crying because of some childish troubles.

One day, Höss recalls, two little children became so deeply engrossed in play that their mother could not move them away... I shall never forget the mother's look praying for mercy, a mother who knew what was ahead... I beckoned to the orderly non-commissioned officer, and he lifted the resisting children and carried them into the chamber amid the heart-rending cry of the mother who followed them... When one sees women and their children go into the gas chamber, one involuntarily thinks of one's own family... True, my family was very well off in

Auschwitz. Every wish of my wife and children was complied with. The children could play at will. My wife had so many of her favourite flowers that she felt in paradise amidst them.[80]

From Auschwitz children were also sent to other camps, for instance the camp at Potulice. On September 9, 1943, a group of 459 men and 753 women arrested by *Einsatzkommando* 9 of Vitebsk came to Auschwitz, and on October 22, 1943, a transport of 298 men and 411 women. Of the large number of children in these groups, about 500 were transferred to the Potulice camp on November 5, 1943.

Children were also imprisoned in the branches of the Auschwitz camp. In Sławięcice, for example, boys of 14 to 16 years of age of various nationalities worked at road building.

In Auschwitz, just like in other camps, children were starved, beaten, tortured, executed and murdered on a mass scale in gas chambers. An additional source of torment was their separation from their parents.

Bogdan Bartnikowski, who found himself in Auschwitz as a 12-year-old boy after the Warsaw Uprising, thus describes a meeting with his mother:[81]

I approach a thin, single wire. My mother does, too. We are only three metres apart. We say nothing. We just look. I smile but the smile must look sad. Mummy, you're so close to me. 'You're terribly thin, son,' she says, tears running down her cheeks. 'I've got a piece of bread here... Catch it... Get away, son, get away,' she shouts at me. I quickly glanced sideways. Too late. An SS-man alighted from a bicycle and swung his arm; everything went black and I tumbled into the mud.

A 15-year-old boy who perished in Auschwitz wrote:[82]

We got used to waiting at 7 a.m., at noon and at 7 p.m. in long rows, bowls for food in our hands, until they poured into them some tepid water with a bit of salt, or some coffee, or perhaps some potatoes. We got used to sleeping without bed-clothes, to greeting each uniform... we got used to being slapped without any reason, to ill-treatment and sentences, we got used to the sight of people dying in their own excrements, to passing by coffins full of human bodies, to ill people lying in repulsive filth and without any physicians... We got used to the sight of thousands of unfortunate people being brought to the camp and thousands being taken away.

Throughout the period that the Auschwitz camp functioned, from 1940 until January 27, 1945, five crematoria were in operation with a total of 52 ovens for burning bodies. From September 1942 onwards bodies were also cremated on open fires. Various belongings once owned by the youngest victims of the Auschwitz camp have been preserved: piles of children's shoes, clothes, toys. The chronicle of events in Auschwitz, kept with meticulous care, reports the following facts from the last period of the camp's existence: on July 9, 1944, empty prams were

taken from the camp along the road from the crematorium toward the railway station. They were arranged in rows of five, and the procession lasted for over an hour. On July 11, 1944, the so-called *Lagersperre* action was ordered in the "family camp" B II b in Birkenau, during which about 3,000 women and children were taken to the crematoria and put to death in the gas chambers. On October 20, 1944, 1,000 boys ranging in age from 12 to 18 were murdered in the gas chamber of Crematorium III.[83]

The last groups of prisoners evacuated deep into the Reich left Auschwitz on January 19, 1945. Only the sick and those unable to travel stayed in the camp under reduced guard. But their fate was already decided: the camp was to be blown up in keeping with the so-called Moll plan.

It is difficult to establish today what prevented the Nazis from carrying out this plan. They only destroyed three crematoria and a warehouse full of stolen property. This happened on January 25 and 26, 1945.

When Soviet troops entered Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, there were about 180 children in the camp (52 under eight years of age and 128 aged eight to 15), who were examined by the doctors. It was found that 67.2 per cent were suffering from avitaminosis and emaciation, 40 per cent had tuberculosis and each child had a weight deficiency of up to 15 kg, including children who had been brought to the camp only a few months before the liberation. About 300 bodies, among them children's bodies, were found in Birkenau, and the body of a pregnant woman was discovered in the ruins of Crematorium V. A large amount of ashes and unburnt human bones, including children's bones, were discovered in the vicinity of Crematoria II, III and IV. Also found in the camp were 115,063 pieces of children's clothing fitting babies and children up to 10 years of age.[84] The register of things dispatched from the camp to the Reich between December 12, 1944, and January 18, 1945, and thus over a period of 37 days, lists 116 freight cars with clothing, one-third of which were children's clothes (99,922 sets of children's clothes and underwear).

The history of the 180 little survivors of the Auschwitz camp did not end with independence. They did not know what their names were, where they came from, where their parents were.

One of the freed children, a four-year-old girl, found a home with Mr. and Mrs. Rydzikowski, of Oświęcim. Her camp number was 70072. She remembered little. This is what she said [85].

My mother had very nice long black braids. She went to work, and when she returned, she would bring me a piece of bread with onions... She was beautiful — I always thought her to be the most beautiful... They selected women who were to be taken to another camp. My Mother was among them, but she did not want to leave me. I never saw her again.

Little Lidka found it very difficult to adapt to normal life. Apart from illnesses, she suffered from serious emotional traumas. Ryszard Rydzikowski recollects that when she was playing with other children, she would gather them together, tell them to kneel down with their hands up and, walking among them, shout loudly: "Shut up, or you'll go to the sick room and the oven; shout up, or Mengele will come." She could not cry and wondered when somebody else cried. Many years after the war she found her mother in the Ukraine.

Eugeniusz Gruszczyński, camp number 149850, found his mother in 1965, at the age of 25. He only remembered that at the Auschwitz camp he was called Giena, and when it was necessary to give him a name, the management of the Children's Home at Bucze near Cieszyn, where the boy was placed in 1945, called him Eugeniusz. His surname was given him by the then manager of the Home, Halina Gruszczyńska. He found his mother in Minsk in Byelorussia.

These children were restored to their families but not everyone was so lucky. Many parents are dead, and the victims of the Nazi regime are haunted not only by the nightmare of camp life, but also by the unanswered question of who they really are.

Another concentration camp on Polish territory where children were kept prisoner was Majdanek, officially called KL Lublin. The first transports of children arrived there in the spring of 1942.

On April 20, 1942, a group of about 1,500 persons, mainly women and children, arrived there from the ghetto at Majdan Tatarski.[86] The SS-men tore babies from their mothers and threw them onto an empty site. The babies died of cold and hunger. The older children, together with persons unfit for work, were shot in the Krępiecki Forest. Within two days about 2,800 persons of both sexes and various ages were executed. In the spring of that year, about 600 persons, including children, were also executed by firing squad within two days. The victims were taken from the Majdanek camp to the Krępiecki Forest in 88 trucks.

There were many children among those brought to the camp from the Lublin ghetto on September 2, 1942; 500 women and children were shot at that time. Throughout April and May 1943 transports of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto arrived almost daily, and in the spring of 1943 five groups arrived from Drancy, France. The children, together with the adults, were killed in the gas chambers.

The largest execution in the camp's history took place on November 3, 1943. On that day 18,400 persons were shot in the pits near the crematorium.

A former prisoner, Mieczysław Panz, writes: [87]

The worst thing happened when a group of mothers with small children were ordered into the pits filled with the still twitching bodies. The poor women

were begging the executioners for mercy for their children. Attempting to prevent the little ones from being drowned in the blood that had collected in the pits, they held them high in the air, thus lengthening their lives by a brief moment. The SS-man put an end to their hopeless efforts by machine-gun fire.

In the summer of 1943 numerous groups of prisoners from the eastern territories began arriving at the camp.

Early in January 1943 *Reichsführer SS* Henrich Himmler instructed the head of the SS Economic and Administrative Head Office, Oswald Pohl, to set up a concentration camp for children from the pacified western regions of the Soviet Union. Pohl ordered the location of the camp in the already existing concentration camp at Majdanek, allocating site V for the purpose and notified Himmler of his decision on January 25, 1943. On March 27, 1943, the SS Economic and Administrative Head Office explained that for the time being it could not open a children's camp at Majdanek because of construction work in the camp area.[88]

Thus no special camp for children was established at Majdanek, and they were instead housed in site V, together with the women.

From mid-June 1943 groups of prisoners from the Zamość region started arriving at the camp. They included people displaced from the villages of Aleksandrowa, Babice, Bedaczów, Dereźnia Majdańska, Dębowiec Huta, Huta Różaniecka, Hyża, Lipowiec, Łówcza, Majdan Górny, Pardysówka Mała, Ruda Kijańska, Siedliska, Tarnogród, Ułazów and other villages as well as people from the transit camps at Zamość and Zwierzyniec. The groups totalled about 16,000 persons and included many children of various ages as well as several babies born on the way to the camp. After a few weeks some of the prisoners were deported to Germany for forced labour, some were taken to Auschwitz, while about 80 children were sent to the camp in Przemysłowa street in Łódź. On July 25 a group of children from the pacified Zamość region were gassed and their mothers were sent to the Reich on forced labour. In July 1943 about 4,000 children from the Lublin region were to be found in the camp [89].

As a result of the efforts of the Polish Red Cross and the Central Welfare Council (RGO), the only Polish charitable institution recognized by the Nazi forces, 957 children from the Zamość region were released from the Majdanek camp between July 19 and August 20, 1943. Of that number, 101 died in hospital of emaciation, although they had spent only about two months in the camp.

This is what Jerzy Kwiatkowski, a lawyer and former inmate of Majdanek, said in his deposition after the war on the subject of the martyrdom of children at the camp: [90]

The SS-man Anton Thumann forbade the 11,000 peasants from the Zamość region to use the washrooms and next cut off water for four weeks. The prisoners

were not allowed to wash on pain of death. Women begged the prisoners working in the kitchen to give them just a glass of water for the children. The summer was very hot at the time. The mortality rate among the children increased from week to week. The dying could not be left in the barrack, but had to be taken outdoors. In the summer the children lay in the mud, and in the winter in the snow.

After a brief interruption, in autumn 1943 transports of Polish children started arriving at the camp again. Previously, on September 2, all Jewish children from the women's camp were taken to the gas chamber.

In October 1943 seventy children were brought from the Potulice camp. On October 2, 1943, Governor General Hans Frank decreed the death penalty for all those who defied the orders of the occupation authorities and obstructed "German reconstruction in the General Government". All detained persons were immediately tried by the summary courts of the security police. As a result of the decree, prisoners, including women and children, were sent to the Majdanek camp, and directed straight to the crematorium without being entered in the camp register.

Groups of children arrived almost daily until the end of the camp's existence. On February 22, 1944, several scores of women with children were brought from the village of Huszlew, Łosice county, and on March 9, about 300 women with children arrived from Radom. Between May 31 and June 10, 1944, several scores of women with children were brought to Majdanek from Budzyń, Lublin voivodship; on June 23 came a transport of prisoners from the camp in Zwierzyniec which included children between three months and 14 years of age and on June 27, about 200 women with children were brought from the same camp. At the same time, Majdanek prisoners were sent to other camps: on April 16, 1944, 299 women with children, including two infants, were transferred to Auschwitz and executed two days after arrival.[91]

The camp SS-man Wilhelm Gerstenmeyer testified that "there were also children aged three to 12 at the camp. I heard that children were gassed".[92] There were also numerous cases of babies being born in Majdanek; all of them died.

From the documents extant it is not possible to establish the number of children who passed through the Majdanek concentration camp. The largest number of prisoners, about 5,000, were kept there in July and August 1943. Children under three did not have their own register or their own numbers in the camp. They were entered exclusively in the files of their mothers, but in spite of this they were treated on an equal footing with adults: they were subjected to all the rigours of the camp regulations.

Children were also killed in other concentration camps and extermi-

nation centres. One of the most tragic, and least known, chapters in the history of the Stutthof concentration camp is the martyrdom of children and juvenile prisoners.[93] The first minors brought to KL Stutthof were boys aged 14 to 17, arrested in Gdańsk and Gdynia in September 1939. Their number cannot be established for lack of documentation. The only proof of the presence of juveniles in the camp at that time are some fragmentary records for 1939, lists of those discharged from the hospital in 1940 as well as a list of those buried in the Zaspa cemetery in Gdańsk-Wrzeszcz and records of deaths for 1939—40. The documents contain the names of a total of 44 boys.

Later on, in 1940 and 1941, juveniles were also imprisoned in the camp. The names of 45 boys and 13 girls are known: 17 boys died; five boys and seven girls were released from the camp; the fate of the others has not been ascertained.

In 1942 the prisoners of the Stutthof camp totalled 5,334, including 437 boys, 52 of them from the concentration camp in Flossenburg, and 99 girls. The youngest boy was 13 years old.

For the majority the tragedy of the occupation did not end in Stutthof, as 104 of the boys imprisoned in Stutthof in 1942 were transferred to other concentration camps (Dachau, Mauthausen).

The juveniles kept in the camp at that time included chiefly Poles and Russians, held there for escaping from forced labour. The length of their stay in the camp until their release was strictly fixed, but it often happened that a prisoner died before he was freed. Seventeen-year-old Romuald Kotłowski, imprisoned in the camp for the period from August 21, 1942, till December 11, 1942, died 10 days before the official end of his sentence.

In practice, however, the camp authorities did not keep the date of release or changed the detainee's category, which resulted in a longer stay in the camp.

From the beginning juveniles were treated as political prisoners. Co-operation with the resistance movement was cited as grounds for arrest. This category included, among others, young people imprisoned in the camp in 1943 following mass arrests in Gdańsk Pomerania. Among those detained were members of the resistance movement as well as civilians accused of cooperation with the partisans. Whole families were brought to Stutthof, on the principle of collective responsibility, or juvenile prisoners were taken as hostages for their fathers or brothers fighting in the partisan units.[94]

It has been established that in 1943 109 girls aged 14 to 17 and 156 boys were imprisoned in the camp. Of this number 89 boys died or were killed in the camp, 40 were transferred to the camps in Mauthausen,

Buchenwald, Natzweiler and Neuengamme, seven were released, while 20 survived in the camp until its evacuation in 1945.

The orders of the camp commandant issued in 1944 confirm the internment of children in the camp.

KL Stuthoff was the place of martyrdom of not only Polish children. On January 15, 1944, among the transport of Russian prisoners sent to Stuthoff by the *Sicherheitspolizei Minsk* were 24 children aged four to 16. In the same month children from Riga were also brought to the camp. Older children were kept in newly built huts and young children were interned in barrack hut 5 in the old section of the camp.

In summer 1944 two Russian brothers aged 14 and 17 were hanged on scaffolds put up in the centre of the parade ground. The younger of the boys burst into tears before the execution, and the older one tried to cheer him up. Before he was hanged, he shouted: "The Red Army will avenge our death. Long live communism."

In June 1944 a group of prisoners attempted to escape on the way to the crematorium. Over a dozen of them were killed by machine-gun fire on the spot. Among them was and 11-year-old boy.[95]

On July 19, 1944, the first transport of prisoners of Jewish descent arrived at Stutthof, directed there by the Security Police (*Sipo*) of Kovno (Kaunas). There were several thousand women in the group, among them mothers with children, for Stutthof was the destination of those evacuated from the camps, prisons and ghettoes situated in the territories of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. In mid-1944 a group of Hungarian Jews were brought to Stutthof for extermination. Groups of prisoners continued to arrive from the Baltic republics occupied by the Nazis and from the Łódź ghetto. In the family groups there were many children who were taken away from their parents upon the arrival at the camp.

A witness to these crimes, Balis Sruoga, thus describes the dramatic scenes in his book *Las Bogów* (A Forest of Gods): [96]

> The mothers would hide them wherever they could: in straw, under blankets, under their skirts. Here and there screams resounded all of a sudden; children got out of their hiding places and mixed with the crowd of those already registered, while those registered escaped to their mothers. Some women, in an attempt to rescue their children, brought boys disguised as girls, and vice versa... Finally the children were taken away from their mothers and sent to an unknown destination. The camp echoed with laments day and night: it seemed as if the world could not survive a moment longer amid this heart-rending sobbing and shouting.

From Stutthof children were transferred to other camps: on March 28, 1944, 29 children, most probably Russian, were moved to the camp at Konstantynów near Łódź. On June 19, 1944, 239 juvenile prisoners

who had arrived at Stutthof in 1943 and first half of 1944 were transferred to Mauthausen. They were unable to work and, as such, designated for transfer by the camp physician.

It has been established on the basis of documents preserved that from January until May 1944 a total of 137 minors were imprisoned in the Stutthof camp.

After the collapse of the Warsaw Uprising, large transports of civilians began arriving at Stutthof from the capital. The first group, numbering 2,913 prisoners, among them 135 children, came on August 31, 1944. The youngest of the children was five years old.

The next transport arrived on September 29, and numbered 1,298 prisoners, including 99 children, the youngest of whom was 10 years old. A separate Block 20 in the so-called "new camp" was then set aside for the boys. After staying in Stutthof for several weeks, most of them were moved to other camps.

On January 25, 1945, in the face of the approaching Soviet offensive, the camp commandant, *SS Sturmbannführer* Paul Werner Hoppe, ordered the evacuation of the prisoners, on foot, in the direction of Lębork. About 25,000 persons left the camp. Bad weather — minus 20° centigrade and thick snow — as well as hunger and disease rapidly led to the prisoners becoming exhausted. The guards shot those who were unable to keep pace with the marching column. On the day of the evacuation there were about 300 children in the camp.

The last phase of the evacuation of the camp began on April 25, 1945. At that time, there were 4,508 prisoners in Stutthof, apart from 30 children who were not on the files. At the fishing port of Mikoszewo, where the prisoners had been taken on foot or brought by narrow-gauge railway, they were put aboard river barges unfit for navigation. At night the barges, towed by fishing boats, reached Hel Peninsula. The prisoners spent the whole day in Hel. At night they were put aboard four barges which, towed by tugboats, made for the open sea, heading westward. After a few days' voyage, without food or water, one barge reached the Danish port of Küntholm, another sank during a storm, some of the prisoners having previously escaped during a call at the island of Rügen, while the remaining two sailed into the Gulf of Lübeck on May 2, and approached four ships lying in the port of Neustadt. Two of the four ships were giant passenger liners, the "Cap Arcona" and the"Deuschland", and the other two were small freighters. Aboard the ships were prisoners from concentration camps, mainly from Neuengamme. The barges that had arrived from Stutthof were moored to one of the ships. The guards changed to the tugboat and set out for the port. The prisoners, taking advantage of the night and the strong onshore wind, started heading the barges towards land by means of primitive oars. Thus commenced the dramatic struggle for the lives of about 2,500 prisoners from

the Stutthof camp who had reached the Gulf of Lübeck. On one of the barges were Polish and Russian women with children. After many hours of struggling with the waves the prisoners approached the shore but the heavy barges could not land. Some of the prisoners jumped in the water and swam, some made primitive rafts; many persons drowned and many others were shot by the Nazis. At that time, the Allied troops entered a suburb of Neustadt. At noon, the RAF began an air-raid on the port and bombed the ships anchored there as enemy vessels. The number of victims of the seaborne evacuation of the Stutthof camp is estimated at 3,000 persons.[97] How many children there actually were among those evacuated and how many of them survived, has been impossible to establish so far. The conditions of the evacuation, which have been intentionally presented here in greater detail, make it likely that no child was able to survive it.

Taking into consideration the fragmentary character of the documentation preserved one can assume that over 4,000 children or 3.3 per cent of all inmates, passed through the Stutthof camp.

The documentation concerning children in another concentration camp situated on Polish territory, KL Gross Rosen in Rogoźnica, is very meagre. It is known that after the collapse of the Warsaw Uprising, a group of 49 children aged 14 to 15 arrived at the camp on November 15, 1944. The children were next transferred to a branch of the camp at Kamienna Góra, a ball-bearing factory. The fate of the children after the transfer is unknown.

At the extermination camp in Treblinka, 750,000 to 800,000 Poles, Polish citizens of Jewish descent and Jews from other occupied states, among them several hundred thousand children, were killed in the period from July 1942 until September 1943.

The camp was divided into two parts: the economic and administrative section and the extermination centre proper. By the railway platform, on the side of the centre, there extended a small unloading yard, and somewhat further north two barracks fenced with barbed wire, with a passage to the chambers. The barrack on the left was an "undressing room" for women and children who went to the chambers first. There was also the so-called "lazaretto", with the Red Cross flag flying at its entrance. Inside, behind a partition, there was a vast pit with the burning bodies of the sick, the disabled and small children who had been shot on its verge. Thus were killed all those who by their slowness could in any way delay the pace of extermination. A road 100 metres long led to the chambers through a forest area fenced in with barbed wire. The victims were killed with exhaust fumes.

In another extermination centre at Chełmno on the Ner about 360,000 persons were killed between December 1941 and January 18, 1945. They included Jewish families from Poland, Austrian, French, Belgian,

Hungarian and German Jews as well as young people from the Łódź and Włocławek regions, children from the Zamość area, Czech children from Lidice and Gypsy families. The prisoners were brought by train to Koło and next by narrow-gauge railway to Zawadki, whence they travelled in groups of 150 to the Chełmno camp. After arriving at the so-called "palace", which housed the camp, the prisoners were ordered to undress and get into vans, men and women with children separately, on the pretext of being taken to have a bath. In the vans, which were actually gas chambers, the prisoners were killed by exhaust fumes. Death occurred within four or five minutes. The camp had three such vans.

The extermination centre in Bełżec swallowed up about 600,000 victims in the years 1941 to 1943. They included Polish citizens of Jewish descent, Polish families who had given shelter to Jews, Polish members of underground organizations as well as German, Austrian, Romanian and Hungarian Jews.[98]

At the extermination centre in Sobibór about 250,000 persons, mostly Jews, were killed between March 1942 and October. 14, 1943.[99] Small children who "obstructed" the extermination programme in Sobibór were torn apart by the legs by 38-year-old *SS-Obersturmführer* Karl Frenzel of Hamburg.

The victims were murdered with exhaust gases generated by engines placed outside the chambers and connected to them by pipes. The bodies of the dead were burnt on pyres built of wooden supports with rails upon them, on which dead bodies were placed. The sick, the elderly, the disabled and small children were separated at a siding and next shot in pits at the so-called site III.

Polish children were also murdered in concentration camps situated outside the frontiers of Poland, e.g., in Neuengamme, Dachau and Ravensbrück.

The first children arrived at the Ravensbrück camp in 1939: Gypsy children in June and later Czech and Dutch children. All of them perished. Successive transports of children arrived at the camp in 1942 and 1943. They included Jewish, Polish, Gypsy and French children. They were brought to the camp with their parents or alone, if their parents had been killed in other camps. From Ravensbrück the children were sent to work in armaments factories. All of them died of emaciation or tuberculosis.

August 28, 1941, witnessed the birth in Ravensbrück of the first Polish child: Henryk Andrzej Rachocki. His mother returned to work, and the baby was sent to an orphanage. In September 1942 Eugenia Żukowska gave birth to a boy in the camp. In September and October 1944 about 12,000 women were brought from Warsaw, among them 179 mothers with children and many pregnant women. The new-born were

housed in Block 11, in a room 2.5 by 4 metres. The infants lay on two beds joined together, covered with a dirty blanket, without any care. Most babies cried day and night because of hunger, cold and bedsores. With the average number of infants being 50, eight died each day. In January 1945 half of Block 32 was allocated for mothers with children. About 100 infants were housed there.

It is difficult to determine how many children were born in the camp. After the war Dr Treite, during his trial in Hamburg, testified that 400 children had been born in Ravensbrück, 50 per cent of whom had died. In late 1944 and early 1945, 86 Polish children were staying in the camp apart from those who had been born there. In February 1945 all children born in Ravensbrück were evacuated to the concentration camp in Bergen-Belsen. The journey began on March 26, 1945, and lasted for a week and a half. The children who had survived the journey died in Bergen-Belsen. In March 1945, 150 pregnant women and 12 new-born babies with mothers were put to death in the gas chambers.

As late as January 1945 Dr Schumann conducted hideous experiments not only on women, but also on girls, testing various methods of sterilization. In Block 9, a 12-year-old girl lay dying in atrocious pain for many days with an open wound of the abdomen.

Near Ravensbrück there was a reformatory camp for German girls (*Jugendschutzlager*). In the autumn of 1944, the camp was evacuated, and the German girls were replaced by old and sick women prisoners who perished soon. A number of children also died in the camp.

In the last days before liberation the Nazis ruthlessly murdered children on a mass scale to get rid of the witnesses to their cruelty. On April 18 and 19, 1945, in Neuengamme children aged five to 12 were hanged after having been used for pseudomedical experiments with tuberculosis bacilli. They were probably Polish boys and girls.[100]

Upon liberation there were 1,000 children in Buchenwald and 500 in Bergen-Belsen.

The fate of Polish children in concentration camps and extermination centres presented in this section shows but a fragment of their martyrdom. The scope of the suffering and tragedy of children was so immense, and the preserved documentation concerning this question is so scarce, that the revelation of the whole truth is impossible.

10. THE CHILDREN'S CAMP IN ŁÓDŹ

A concentration camp for young people over 16 years of age who were said to require care had been planned in the Third Reich in 1941 and opened a year later. It was located in Mohringen/Solling and began

its activities on January 1, 1942. A similar concentration camp for girls started functioning in Uckermark on June 1, 1942. Both camps held Polish children and young people. The camps were under the administration of the Concentration Camps Inspectorate, which in March 1942 was incorporated in the SS Economic and Administrative Head Office (WVHA).

In the second half of 1942 plans were prepared for opening a concentration camp for minors in the vicinity of Łódź, under the name of *Polen-Jugendverwahrlager der Sicherheitspolizei in Litzmannstadt.*

The question of isolating minors of Polish nationality in the annexed territories began to exercise the German autorities in mid-1941. It was decided to set up camps which would prevent the formation of a "reservoir of professional deliquency", as Reinhard Heydrich described it in a letter to Henrich Himmler of November 2, 1941.[101]

The origin of concentration camps of this type can be traced to the decree of *Reichsführer SS* and head of the German police, Heinrich Himmler, of June 10, 1941, in which he ordered that "juvenile Polish delinquents" should not be put in care, but sent immediately to concentration camps. Since Himmler, however, had determined neither the age limit nor the criterion of a "delinquent", Reinhard Heydrich, suggested to Himmler that, "for fundamental reasons", all youngsters over 16 years of age should be sent to the existing concentration camps, whereas separate camps should be organized for children aged seven to 16. He proposed the locality of Dzierżąnia near Łódź, and Himmler accepted it by his decision of November 15, 1941.

Thus was born the concept of the division of concentration camps into two categories: for prisoners over 16 and under 16 years of age. The secret motivation of the standpoint of the SS Security Police and Security Service (Sipo and SD) was as follows:

> In the eastern territories of Germany, especially in the *Warthegau*, the demoralization of Polish youth has attained considerable dimensions and poses a serious threat to German youth. The causes of this demoralization rest, above all, in the unbelievably primitive standard of living of the Poles. The war has separated many families, and those authorized to bring up youth are unable to fulfil their duties, while Polish schools have been closed. Hence Polish children loiter without any supervision or occupation, beg for alms, traffic and steal, thus becoming a source of moral danger to German youth.[102]

As early as August 1941 it was officially stated that all camps of this kind, such as the planned camp for Polish youth in Łódź, were to be subordinated to the Concentration Camps Inspector, responsible for the organization of supervision in the camps. At a conference held at the office of the President of Police in Łódź in July 1941, which

was attended by representatives of the RSHA, the Central Budget and Building Office, the Concentration Camps Inspectorate, the Sipo and SD in Poznań and the Kripo in Poznań, the concept enlisted the support of the participants.

The first mention of a camp for Polish youth in Łódź is contained in a report of April 31, 1942, in which the head of the Economic and Administrative Head Office (WVHA) Oswald Pohl (who was the principal defendant in the fourth Nuremberg trial), notified Himmler that he had carried out his order of March 3, 1942, concerning the incorporation of the Concentration Camps Inspectorate in the WVHA.[103]

The *Polen-Jugendverwahrlager* was included in the organizational structure of the criminal police. Its opening was scheduled for December 1, 1942, by a decree of the Reich Main Security Office of November 28, 1941.

The very history of the origins of the Łódź camp indicates that it was not an institution of a preventive or educational character. Polish children were deprived of any legal protection and were sent to the camp on the basis of uncontrolled administrative decisions founded on one-sided information, furnished mostly by the police. The decisions were made without any court orders and did not specify the length of imprisonment.

The character of the Łódź camp should not be assessed on the basis of its official name and the formally assigned task of protecting German youth against the "demoralized Polish youth", but from the viewpoint of the actual state of affairs, the applied practices and the real objectives. Reinhard Heydrich thus formulated the programme of education":[104]

> As regards juvenile Poles, no other educational measures need be applied than the inculcation of order, cleanliness and hard work. In the field of knowledge and skills they ought to be taught only as much as to be able to read a simple instruction, to understand it and to apply it appropriately.

A more detailed instruction concerning slave labour in the Łódź camp was elaborated by the criminal police (*Kriminalpolizeistelle*) in Łódź.[105] The racial selection in the camp followed Heinrich Himmler's well-known directives.

The *Polen-Jugendverwahrlager der Sicherheitspolizei in Litzmannstadt* possessed the character of a concentration camp as defined by international laws and the Nuremberg judgments, the difference being that it was designed for children and young people of Polish nationality under 16 years of age.

According to the German documentation, causes for imprisonment in the camp fell within the following categories: "loitering" in public

places, homelessness, avoidance of forced labour, suspicion of taking part in the resistance movement, being a member of a family who refused to sign the *Volksliste*, confinement of the parents in a camp or a prison, or their death there, physical or mental handicap, or without definite causes.

It should be said that the official German information on the offences and misdemeanours committed by minors constitutes no proof, whatsoever, in the legal sense. As a rule, the basic details of a charge are lacking, such as the place and time of the offence, the object and value of the damage done, the victim, etc.

Placement orders were substantiated, for example, in the following manner:

— the boy does not do his work, he engages in illicit trade, he was caught stealing;

— he was an inmate of the camp in Mysłowice;

— he illegally purchased food coupons.

A certain, though insignificant, number of placement orders contained more detailed charges, such as e.g.:

— he is a member of a gang of thieves and looters who steal food coupons and sell the purchased good at black-market prices;

— the boy, together with his brother Franciszek, engages in illicit trade; to this end they travel to the General Government. Their mother is wanted by the police for the same offence;

— he steals, together with other children, fruit from the gardens, especially those belonging to German citizens. His mother does not look after him and his father is dead;

— he crossed the frontier illegally with 720 RM in cash.

A large number of motions calling for imprisonment in the camp contained the following justification, characteristic in view of the extremely difficult family situation and living conditions of Polish youngsters:

— the father is in the concentration camp, the Polish mother has a bad influence on the girl, who loafs and was twice detained by the police;

— the boy loiters and begs, the mother is dead;

— the mother is dead, the boys run the streets. The younger brother, Henryk, is already held in the Łódź camp;

— the boy is a vagrant and does not go to school, he earns money carrying luggage at the Katowice railway station;

— the father is dead, the mother is detained, the brothers and sisters are working in the Reich, the boy is a vagrant;

— the father died in the concentration camp in Mauthausen, the working mother is unable to look after the child (ten years old), the child loafs and steals;

— the father is arrested, the mother is dead, the child is a vagrant and does not go to school.

A considerable number of the minors falling in this category were previously held in the Mysłowice prison (*Ersatz-Polizei-Gefängnis*), one of the most ruthless in Silesia.

A typical case was that of 12-year-old Tadeusz Panenkowski who was sent to the camp for evading work, because "being a cowherd he left the cattle".

Motions for the imprisonment in the camp of minors suspected of cooperation with the resistance movement were thus formulated:

— he is linked with a subversive group and paratroopers from the Soviet Union, whom he supplies with food and coupons;

— the mother is dead, the boy was caught placing stones on the railway track;

— throwing stones at a train on the Myszków-Poraj line;

— placing an iron slab on the rails.

Minors were also sent to the camp on the principle of collective responsibility. This is exemplified by the imprisonment in the camp of about 80 children from the village of Mosiny in the Poznań region, whose parents were charged with sabotage: mass-scale poisoning of cattle and destruction of fodder.

Many of the prisoners were children whose parents had been sent to concentration camps, imprisoned, deported for forced labour, or executed. It was believed that, in order to avoid the threat of demoralization and lack of care, the only solution was confinement in the Łódź camp. The following causes were cited:

— the father is working in the Reich, the mother is in the Auschwitz concentration camp, the children are threatened by negligence;

— the father is working in the Reich, the mother is in concentration camp, the child is a vagrant and there is nobody to care for him;

— the boy's father is dead, his mother is in the Auschwitz camp.

In the Third Reich, physically and mentally handicapped children were doomed to death as part of the programme of "euthanasia", as interpreted by Nazi ideology. They were also sent to the Łódź camp, which is confirmed by documentation:

— a motion to confine a deaf-mute brother and sister, Jerzy and Renata Kaschnia (aged seven), in the Łódź camp;

— a three-year-old foundling was placed in an orphanage in Katowice; he is difficult to bring up, is crippled, wets the bed, his head trembles and he has an inclination to steal.

Under the Nazis system, such children were regarded as "unnecessary bread-eaters".

As mentioned earlier, confinement in the Łódź camp took place not

The Children's Camp at Łódź-Dzierżążnia

er Reichsminister des Innern

IV J I 76/42
8400

Es wird gebeten, dieses Geschäftszeichen und den Gegenstand bei weiteren Schreiben anzugeben.

Berlin, den 3. Dezember 1942.
NW 7, Unter den Linden 72
Fernsprecher: Ortsanruf 120034
Fernanruf 120037
Fernschreiber: Ortsverkehr 517
Fernverkehr KI 517
Drahtanschrift: Reichsinnenminister.

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Schnellbrief

den Herrn Oberpräsidenten der Provinz Oberschlesien
-Verwaltung des Prov.Verbandes-Landesjugendamt-
z.Hd.v.Herrn Provinzialverwaltungsrat Brockmann in Kattowitz,

den Herrn Reichsstatthalter im Warthegau, -Gaujugendamt-
z.Hd.v.Herrn Landesrat Bartels in Posen,

den Herrn Reichsstatthalter im Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreußen
-Gauselbstverwaltung-Gaujugendamt- z.Hd.v.Herrn Verwaltungsrat Glashagen
in Danzig,

den Herrn Reichsstatthalter im Sudetengau
-Gauselbstverwaltung,Gaujugendamt-
z.Hd.v.Herrn Gauverwaltungsrat Schleger in Reichenberg,

den Herrn Oberpräsidenten der Provinz Niederschlesien
-Verwaltung des Prov.Verbandes-,Landesjugendamt-
in Breslau- zur Kenntnis.

den Herrn Oberpräsidenten der Provinz Ostpreußen
-Verwaltung des Prov.Verbandes-Landesjugendamt- in Königsberg
- zur Kenntnis.

trifft: Unterbringung fremdvölkischer insbesondere
polnischer Minderjähriger.

Die Fürsorgeerziehung wurde bisher,insbesondere in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten dadurch belastet,daß aus Mangel an besonderen Einrichtungen fremdvölkische insbesondere polnische Jugendliche der deutschen Fürsorgeerziehung überwiesen wurden.

Der Reichsführer-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei - Reichssicherheitshauptamt - hat nunmehr,auch auf meine Anregung hin,ein Lager für polnische Jugendliche und zwar das Polen-Jugendverwahrlager Litzmannstadt errichtet,in das vom 1.Dezember 1942 an eingewiesen wird.

Ich ersuche,dafür zu sorgen,daß

1.von der Fürsorgeerziehungsbehörde alle zur Zeit in Fürsorgeerziehung befindlichen polnischen Minderjährigen sofort der zuständigen Kriminalpolizeileitstelle zur Einweisung in das Polen-Jugendverwahrlager gemeldet werden,

A German document listing the principles according to which children were sent to the camp in Łódź

2. daß in Zukunft seitens der Jugendämter Anträge auf Fürsorgeerziehung für polnische Minderjährige nicht mehr gestellt werden,

3. die Jugendämter unterrichtet werden, daß Fälle von drohender oder eingetretener Verwahrlosung polnischer Minderjähriger unverzüglich der zuständigen Kriminalpolizeileitstelle mit dem Hinweis mitzuteilen sind, daß zum Schutz der deutschen Jugend die Aufnahme des polnischen Minderjährigen in das Polen-Jugendverwahrlager notwendig ist.

Die Jugendämter und die Fürsorgeerziehungsbehörden haben mit den Kriminalpolizei-leit-stellen in Fragen der Unterbringung polnischer Minderjähriger engste Fühlung zu halten und diese bei der Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Einweisung in das Lager zu unterstützen.

Die Kriminalpolizei-leit-stellen werden ihrerseits den Jugendämtern alle Fälle der Einweisung in das Lager für polnische Minderjährige melden, insbesondere auch dann, wenn die Einweisung ohne ihre Mitwirkung durchgeführt wurde. Bei Fürsorgezöglingen wird die Meldung an die Fürsorgeerziehungsbehörde gehen. Hierdurch wird erreicht, daß insbesondere die Jugendämter über die Beseitigung der auch von ihnen anläßlich der Jugendhilfearbeit an deutschen Jugendlichen festgestellten Gefahren unterrichtet sind.

Die Prüfung der Eindeutschungsfähigkeit der Polenkinder wird vom Lager im Benehmen mit der Außenstelle Litzmannstadt des SS-Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamtes veranlaßt.

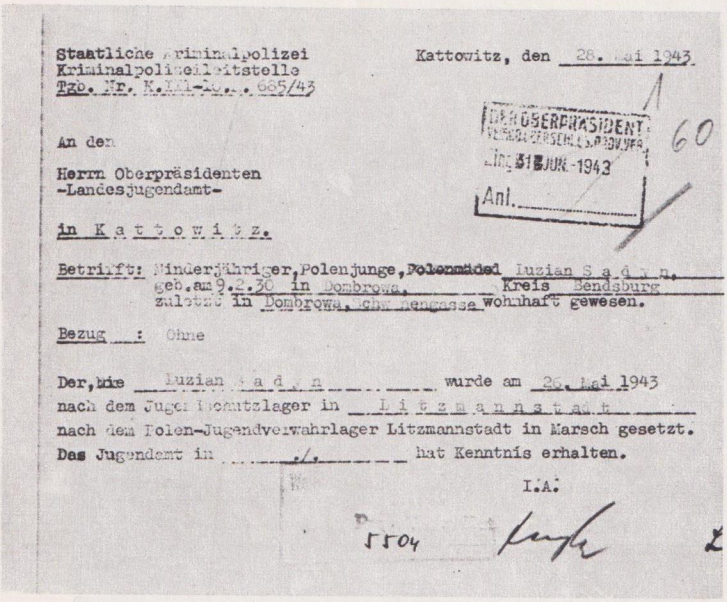
Aus praktischen Erwägungen kommen für die Einweisung zunächst nur männliche Jugendliche im Alter von 12-16 Jahren in Frage.

Ich ersuche, mir über die Durchführung dieses Erlasses bis zum 15. Februar 1943 zu berichten; dabei ist die Zahl der namhaft gemachten und die Zahl der tatsächlich untergebrachten minderjährigen Polen anzugeben. Die für die Jugendämter Ihres Bereichs erforderlichen Überdrucke dieses Erlasses sind zur weiteren Verteilung durch Sie beigefügt.

Im Auftrag
gez. Dr. Muthesius.

Reichsministerium des Innern Kanzlei

Beglaubigt:
Königemann
Regierungssekretär.



Staatliche Kriminalpolizei
Kriminalpolizeileitstelle
Tgb. Nr. K.[illegible] 685/43

Kattowitz, den 28. Mai 1943

DER OBERPRÄSIDENT
eing. 31. JUNI 1943
Anl.

60

An den

Herrn Oberpräsidenten
-Landesjugendamt-

in Kattowitz.

Betrifft: Minderjähriger, Polenjunge, ~~Polenmädel~~ Lucjan Sadyn,
geb. am 9.2.30 in Dombrowa, Kreis Bendsburg
zuletzt in Dombrowa, Schulgasse wohnhaft gewesen.

Bezug: Ohne

Der, ~~die~~ Lucjan Sadyn wurde am 26. Mai 1943
nach dem Jugendschutzlager in Litzmannstadt
nach dem Polen-Jugendverwahrlager Litzmannstadt in Marsch gesetzt.
Das Jugendamt in ./. hat Kenntnis erhalten.

I.A.

5504

A letter committing Lucjan Sadyn, aged 13, to a camp

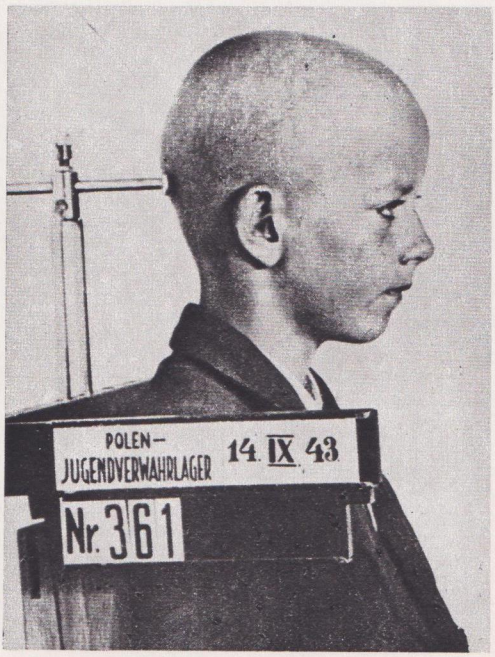
Heinz Heinrich Fugge, *Lagerführer* of the Łódź camp in Przemysłowa street at Dzierżążnia

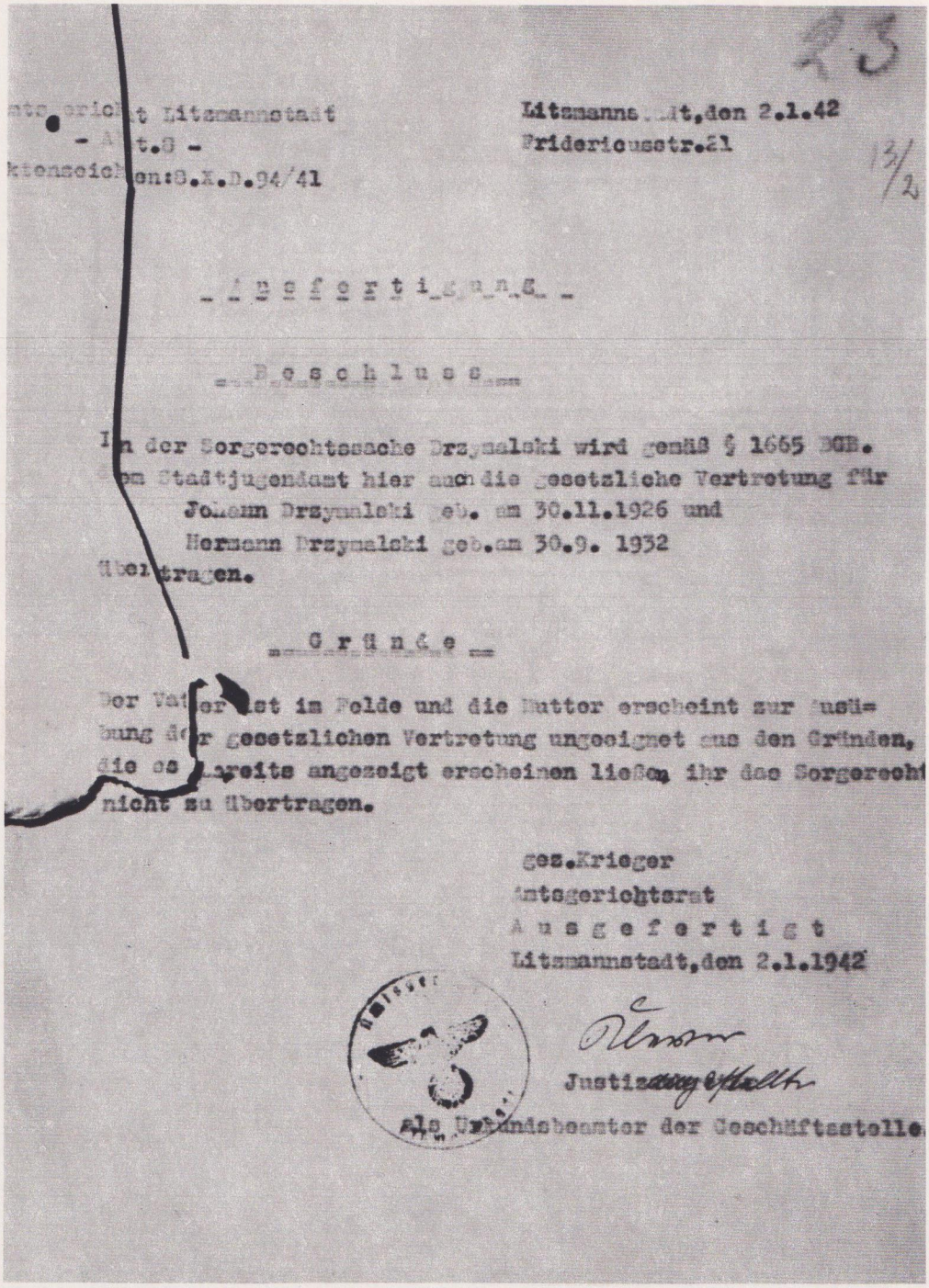
Polish children brought to a camp were photographed and numbered. Some of the original photos taken by the SS officers have been preserved. These photographs show Maria Wiśniewska, transferred to Ravensbrück camp in 1944, Elżbieta Konarska, aged 10, Wiesława Skibińska brought to the camp in September 1943, and an unknown boy

POLEN–
JUGENDVERWAHRLAGER
8 XII 43
Nr. 501

POLEN–
JUGENDVERWAHRLAGER
14. IX 43
Nr. 335

POLEN–
JUGENDVERWAHRLAGER
14. IX 43
Nr. 352


POLEN–
JUGENDVERWAHRLAGER
14. IX 43
Nr. 361



Amtsgericht Litzmannstadt
- Abt.8 -
Aktenzeichen: 8.K.D.94/41

Litzmannstadt, den 2.1.42
Friedrichsstr.21

13/2

23

Ausfertigung

Beschluss

In der Sorgerechtssache Drzymalski wird gemäß § 1665 BGB. vom Stadtjugendamt hier auch die gesetzliche Vertretung für
Johann Drzymalski geb. am 30.11.1926 und
Hermann Drzymalski geb.am 30.9. 1932
übertragen.

Gründe

Der Vater ist im Felde und die Mutter erscheint zur Ausübung der gesetzlichen Vertretung ungeeignet aus den Gründen, die es bereits angezeigt erscheinen ließen, ihr das Sorgerecht nicht zu übertragen.

gez.Krieger
Amtsgerichtsrat
Ausgefertigt
Litzmannstadt, den 2.1.1942

Justizangestellte
als Urkundsbeamter der Geschäftsstelle

A ruling of the district court in Łódź depriving Janina Drzymalska of her maternal right to look after her sons, Jan and Herman

SS officers are making a review of young prisoners

Der Oberpräsident
(Verwaltung des Oberschlesischen Provinzialverbandes)
Landesjugendamt
60 022

Vertraulich!

Kattowitz, den 22. Dezember 1942.
Emmastraße 12.
Fernruf: 32442/43

X

61
140

An

a) die Herren Landräte und Oberbürgermeister – Jugendämter – der Provinz Oberschlesien,

b) nachrichtlich den Herren Regierungspräsidenten in Kattowitz und Oppeln der Gauleitung der NSDAP. sowie den Herren Kreisleitern der NSDAP.

Betr.: Unterbringung fremdvölkischer, insbesondere polnischer Minderjähriger.

Vorg.: Mein Rundschreiben von 15. 6. 1942. Aktenzeichen: 61 000.

Im Nachgang meines vorgenannten Rundschreibens, mit den ich seinerzeit bat, davon abzusehen, für fremdvölkische Jugendliche bei den Vormundschaftsgerichten die vorläufige oder endgültige Fürsorgeerziehung zu beantragen, übersende ich in der Anlage einen Abdruck des Erlasses des Herrn Reichsministers des Innern vom 3. Dezember 1942, Geschäftszeichen: $\frac{\text{IV J I 76/42,}}{8400}$ über die Unterbringung fremdvölkischer, insbesondere polnischer Minderjähriger, im **Polen-Jugendverwahrlager Litzmannstadt.** Die Möglichkeit, verwahrloste polnische Minderjährige jetzt einer Verwahrung zuzuführen, wird von den Jugendämtern, wie ich annehme, sehr begrüßt werden.

Zur Durchführung des Einweisungsverfahrens mache ich unter Bezugnahme auf die Ausführungen anläßlich der Arbeitsbesprechung am 3. und 4. Dezember 1942 in Loben nochmals darauf aufmerksam, daß mit der Kriminalpolizeileitstelle Kattowitz und der Kriminalpolizeistelle Oppeln eine Vereinbarung getroffen ist, nach der diese Dienststellen sich in **allen** Fällen des Landesjugendamtes bedienen. Anträge auf Einweisung in das Polen-Jngendverwahrlager sind also **nicht** unmittelber an die Kriminalpolizeileitstelle Kattowitz oder die Kriminalpolizeistelle Oppeln zu richten, sondern ausschließlich an das unterzeichnete Landesjugendamt, wie auch anderseits die kriminalpolizeilichen Dienststellen sich nicht unmittelbar an die Jugendämter, sondern stets an das Landesjugendamt wenden werden.

Ich bitte, diese Regelung für das Einweisungsverfahren unbedingt zu beachten. Sie verfolgt den Zweck, in der Provinz Oberschlesien eine einheitliche und gleichmäßige Handhabung für die Behandlung der fremdvölkischen Jugendlichen zu gewährleisten. Ich bemerke dazu, daß die gleiche Regelung für Einweisungsanträge auf Unterbringung, im Jugendschutzlager vereinbart worden ist.

Ich bitte, alle dort bestehenden Vorgänge über verwahrloste fremdvölkische, insbesondere polnische Minderjährige einer genauen Durchsicht zu unterziehen und alle für eine Verwahrung in Betracht kommenden Jugendlichen, auch wenn sie der Alterabgrenzung, die im Erlaß des Herrn Reichsministers des Innern aus Zweckmäßigkeitsgründen zunächst gewählt werden mußte, nicht entsprechen sollten, zu melden, damit die lückenlose Erfassung aller fremdvölkischen Jugendlichen, die eine ständige Gefahr für die Ruhe und Sicherheit und die Gefährdung der deutschen Jugend bedeuten, erfaßt werden und auch möglichst beschleunigt in die Verwahrung genommen werden können.

Sollten wider Erwarten keine Fremdvölkischen Jugendlichen für eine Verwahrung gemelder werden können, so bitte ich, mir **bis zum 1. Februar 1943 Fehlanzeige** zu erstatten.

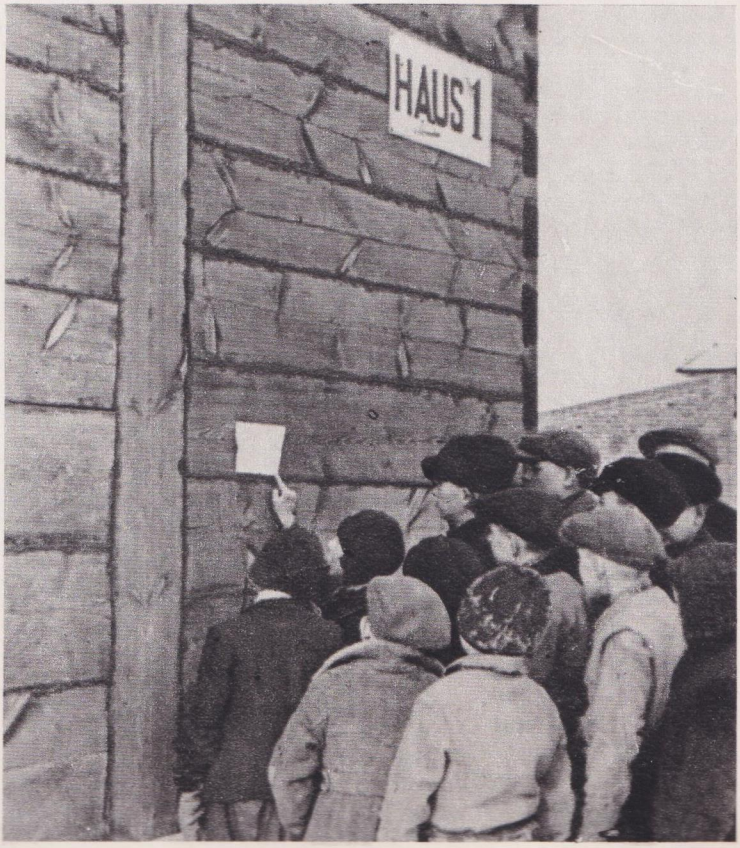
Im Auftrage:

Superior officers of the NSDAP and the SS often visited the camp

A German document providing for the dispatch of children to the Łódź camp

In the Łódź camp

Queuing up for soup



Children reading an announcement issued by the camp authorities

Lost, miserable and starving

Roll-call

Uruszula Kaczmarek, aged 14, who died in the camp

Behind the group of girls is Eugenie Pohl who was sentenced to 25 years in prison by a court of the Polish People's Republic

Edward Baran, aged 14, prisoner of the Łódź camp from 1943 to August 1944, sent to a hospital in Sosnowiec suffering from general exhaustion. On the photo: the boy after leaving hospital

only without a court verdict, but even without substitute proceedings with a legal decision. Imprisonment was based on the uncontrolled orders of the police authorities, without any previous investigations. Basically, the whole procedure was limited to a motion (according to an accepted pattern) of the territorially competent unit of the *Kriminalpolizeistelle* in Łódź to confine a prisoner in the camp.[106]

It can be established on the basis of the available German documentation that there was not a single case when the imprisonment of a minor was ordered for a definite period of time, even when no charges had been brought against him.

Neither regulations nor practice provided for a limitation of the stay of minors in the camp, which also had a destructive influence on the mental condition of the children.

The juvenile prisoners worked in the camp workshops, in the kitchen, the laundry, etc., and also in the branch of the camp in Dzierżążnia, called *Arbeitsbetrieb*, which was an agricultural estate. The task of the latter was to provide the Łódź camp with food.

The work was excessively hard, beyond the physical strength of a child, and involved dangers. This is proved by reports of the camp command to the RSHA on the sanitary situation existing in the camp as well as by notes in the camp files.

A report of September 1943 lists 926 prisoners to whom medical aid was extended. The list comprises, among other things, 60 cases of "cuts at work". In the next month, October 1943, medical aid was rendered in 551 cases, including 60 sores and 64 cuts suffered at work. In that period, the number of prisoners averaged 999.

Two former inmates, Franciszek Chucherko and Zbigniew Lewandowski, recall [107]:

> Sunny days were the most difficult, when sweat dripped down the face and the lips were parched because of thirst and scorching heat, while nobody was allowed to leave work even for a moment.
>
> A boy working in the footwear workshop failed to accomplish his quota; the guard beat him until his skin cracked and blood was streaming. The beaten boy probably died because he did not return and I never saw him again.

Stanisław Stępniak reminisces:

> Road rolling was the hardest work. The SS-men and the civilians harnessed us to a roller and ordered us to draw. When we could not pull it or when we fell down of fatigue, they beat us with sticks or whips. The roller was very heavy.

The individual camp files recorded, for example, that Teresa Iwicka, Stanisława Śruba and Eugenia Schmidt were flogged for having failed to get up at 4 a.m. to milk the cows. Flogging was also inflicted on Jad-

wiga Wiśniewska for "failing to turn up at work" and on Barbara Woźniak for "laziness and falling asleep at work".

The above examples are but fragmentary ones. The cases of deaths of children, reported by the camp administration, due to exhaustion and weakening of the cardiac muscle were probably the effect of excessive labour beyond the young prisoners' strength. Extermination through work was after all one of the fundamental principles of the Third Reich's policy toward the conquered nations, as confirmed by the Nuremberg judgments. It should be emphasized that this work benefitted the war economy of the invader, for the prisoners wove ammunition baskets, sewed boots for the guards, cartridge pouches and haversacks for the troops.

The camp, located in a separated area within the ghetto, consisted of over a dozen large wooden barracks; the small, barred windows were placed high above the floor (the barracks for "political" prisoners had no windows); there was no electricity. The prisoners washed under a pump in the yard both in the summer and in the winter; no wonder, then, that a more thorough wash was regarded as a punishment.

Upon arrival at the camp, the children were photographed, their individual records were set up, and they were given camp numbers. They received camp clothes of grey denim which they wore the year round, regardless of the season. The girls had dresses and jackets, and the boys wore suits and forage-caps, wooden clogs on their feet. Neither socks nor stockings were issued. Some children, immediately after their arrival at the camp, were marked with red crosses painted on their backs, or with bands to be worn on sleeves or trouser legs. They were especially ill-treated, punished more frequently and forced to do the most strenuous jobs. The children slept 50 to a barrack on two-tier bunks of wooden boards, without mattresses. They were issued one blanket each.

The camp day started at 6 a.m. and lasted 12 hours. A roll call took place after breakfast, and next work began and continued also after dinner. For breakfast, the small prisoners received coffee substitute without sugar and 200 grams of bread, for dinner a half-litre of soup of beet or cabbage leaves, and for supper coffee substitute again. Summer and winter alike, in all kinds of weather, the children had dinner outdoors.

Marian Miśkiewicz, employed as a shoemaker, thus wrote:[108]

> One day we prepared a large pot of glue to size leather. All of a sudden the glue disappeared. It later turned out that it had been eaten up by the hungry children.

Permanent starvation at a time when the young organism, deprived of reserves, was developing, led to rapid emaciation. Many children

fell ill, and the mortality rate in the camp was very high. From the 14 monthly reports covering the period from September 1943 until November 1944, it appears that in July 1944, with the number of prisoners averaging 1,040, medical aid was extended in 2,687 cases. In November of that year, there were 78 cases of frostbites and burns, 280 cases of ulcers and boils, 20 cases of foot wounds and 250 cases of typhus. These are only cases noticed and recorded by the camp authorities.

The inhuman conditions in which the children lived were further worsened by cruel punishments inflicted by the guards. The analysis, carried out and reviewed on many occasions, of the regime applied in the Nazi camps confirms the view that these actions were not the outcome of some pathological deviation of human nature, but the effect of training and systematically instilled methods, particularly in such formations as the *Schutz Staffeln* (SS), the *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Gestapo) and the *Sicherheitspolizei* (Sipo).

Cruelty and maltreatment were deliberate; they constituted an integral part of the training of the above-mentioned formations. The feeling of pity, the display of compassion and forbearance disqualified a true Nazi, revealed his weakness. Cruelty was a virtue most valued in camp guards and a springboard to his further career. The components of this "virtue" were contempt and hatred.

What furthers the harmonious development of a child are friendliness, warmth and love. Then a child develops mentally faster and better, sooner achieves physical fitness and has better facilities for making friends. Its sense of security is assured, and thus it is protected from fear and mental imbalance. Of all this the small prisoners of the camp were deprived on principle.

Flogging was the main punishment. For minor offences, such as breaking a pot, infringing the regulations or a lacking button, 15 to 20 lashes were inflicted. Major offences included the theft of bread, speaking Polish and picking fruit, and were punished by up to 80 lashes in instalments. Other punishments included jumping in a sack tied round the neck, confinement to a dungeon for several or more days, deprivation of meals, jumping in a squatting position and practising parade march. There were frequent cases of sadistic torture of prisoners, for example hanging by the feet in the garage, submerging the head in oil and pouring cold water over a prisoner in frosty weather.

The Łódź camp was established toward the end of the third year of the Nazi occupation, and it functioned for a relatively brief time, which is not without its consequence for the appraisal of its genocidal activities.

According to sanitary reports, the number of prisoners in the camp

averaged about 1,000 (1,089 in January 1944). If we add to this number the 150 girls staying in the *Arbeitsbetrieb* Dzierżążnia and the 200 children who probably stayed in the ghetto hospital, the total number of prisoners will rise to about 1,500.

The Łódź camp was the only of its kind in the Polish territories. Its very existence, which was by no means kept secret, produced a sense of danger among the Polish population.

The aim of the camp was the physical and mental annihilation of prisoners through slave labour. The process was not rapid; it went on gradually, day after day, but in quite distinct a manner.

11. CAMPS FOR POLES IN SILESIA (POLENLAGER)

Within the Nazi camp system, camps for the Polish population set up in Silesia played a special role. These camps were established in the territory of the Upper Silesian Province created in 1940 which embraced the Katowice and Opole Regencies and incorporated some Czechoslovak territory.

The Nazi onslaught on the Soviet Union caused a fundamental change in the political and military situation of the Third Reich, for a new front had emerged in Europe, that was to be of decisive significance for the future of the war. This was well realized by both the Polish and German population. The steep increase of military needs, the geographical and strategic location of the Polish territories with respect to the new front, the growth of optimistic feelings and the expansion of the Polish resistance movement determined the evolution of new concepts and the application of different political methods. In confrontation with the changing reality of the war, the carefully elaborated plants for the near and more distant future had to be subject to alterations and modifications.

The effects of the division of the population into four categories on the basis of the *Volksliste* decree and, consequently, the creation of another category of „charges" of the Third Reich further complicated the political and nationality situation in the Upper Silesian Province. The existing difficulties were aggravated by the influx of ethnic Germans transplanted from the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, Romania, Baltic states and other countries.

Despite the tremendous war effort, the Nazi administrative machinery resorted to all possible means to move, within the shortest time, all people of German descent living in Europe to the territories of the Greater Reich. By January 15, 1942, more than half a million ethnic Germans had been evacuated from the East, 289,000 of whom were

settled in the Polish territories incorporated in the Reich. By January 1944, 403,733 Germans had been transplated there, and by the end of the war over 1,200,000 Germans from various countries had settled there.[109]

As early as three months after the hostilities had started on the eastern front, the chief of the Head Office of the RKFDV, Ulrich Greifelt, notified Reinhard Heydrich, of the great difficulties encountered when settling Germans from Bessarabia, Bukovina and Lithuania in the so-called incorporated territories. There were not enough farmsteads for them, and the Polish peasant families expelled from their farms for this purpose could hardly find room within the boundaries of those territories. This aroused dissatisfaction bordering on mutiny among the Germans staying in the camps subordinated to the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (German National Mediation Office, or VoMi). Long sojourns in resettlement camps had demoralizing effects, while the employment of rural youth in factories was not the right solution. For these reasons, Ulrich Greifelt proposed to resume expelling Poles from the territories of the General Government without any further delay. The president of the Upper Silesian Province therefore relinquished the ambition to carry out the forced Germanization of the Polish population and authorized a plenipotentiary of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom to evict and deport the Polish population from the eastern as well as Cieszyn and Bielsko Biała districts.[110]

The decision to set up *Polenlager* was taken by Heinrich Himmler in mid-1942, and the administration of the camps was entrusted to the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* as a particularly important task which so far had not fallen within the competence of that institution.[111]

Initially, the character and purpose of these camps was not clearly established. The *Polenlager* were to be temporary camps (*Auffangslager*) of some sort, but in the end it was decided that they would be permanent camps for the displaced population who were to give way to German settlers. Later the Nazis used the camps for Poles not only from Silesia, but also from the Dąbrowa Basin as a form of political repression and on the grounds of "collective responsibility".

Around mid-1942, when the first camps for Poles were being established, the organizational basis for Nazi crimes had become consolidated and functioned with the utmost precision. The *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* already commanded a vast network of assembly points for German resettlers, located in various public, religious and secular institutions as well as in private residences. It had obtained an unlimited right to confiscate buildings on the basis of an authorization granted to it by Heinrich Himmler on December 30, 1939. It exercised these powers on a broad scale, taking no heed of any considerations. Hence VoMi camps, including *Polenlager,* were located in monasteries, seminaries,

homes for the elderly, schools, residences, former mines and factory buildings. Local administrative authorities cooperated in the confiscation of those building, as established by the US Military Tribunal during the eighth Nuremberg trial. Some of the existing camps for German resettlers were turned into *Polenlager;* the German population were settled or transferred to another camp, and the camp was fenced in with barbed wire.

In establishing *Polenlager* care was taken to see that they were surrounded by German-inhabited areas.

In the west the furthest camp was camp no. 86 in Otmuchów, in the south-west camp no. 85 in Korfantów and in the east camp no. 10 in Siemianowice Śląskie.

The Upper Silesian Province was the only administrative unit in which such camps were established. *Polenlager* became convenient tools for the plunder of property, the employment of slave labour, forced relinquishment of nationality and enlistment in the army, for physical and mental constraint, and the spread of terror. The camps also served to isolate the Polish intelligentsia, for example teachers who were regarded as politically uncertain. In 1943 the social spectrum of camp inmates was broadened; the criterion was no longer the needs of resettlers, but clearly political. The principle of "collective responsibility" was applied to the Polish population, notably those from the Dąbrowa Basin. Whole families professing progressive views or suspected of subversive activities were imprisoned in the camps. As a result of mass arrests in February and August 1943, many minors found themselves in the camps, whose parents had been sent to concentration camps after they had been separated from their children in the "substitute police prison" in Mysłowice.

Now and then various commissions composed of "racial experts" visited the camps; all prisoners, whatever their age or sex, and their children were brought before them.

The distribution of the camps over individual districts within their wartime boundaries was as follows: [112]

District	Locality	Camp
	Katowice Regency	
Cieszyn	Petrowice *	*Polenlager* no. 41
Cieszyn	Frysztat *	*Polenlager* no. 40
Cieszyn	Bohumin *	*Polenlager* no. 32
Pszczyna	Orzesze	*Polenlager* no. 28
Pszczyna	Zawiść	*Polenlager* no. 189
Rybnik	Łyski	*Polenlager* no. 56

District	Locality	Camp
Rybnik	Żory	*Polenlager* no. 95
Rybnik	Rybnik	*Polenlager* no. 97
Rybnik	Pszów	*Polenlager* no. 58
Bielsko-Biała	Czechowice	*Polenlager* no. 63
Gliwice	Gliwice—Sobieszowice	*Polenlager* no. 93
Chorzów	Chorzów (Królewska Huta)	*Polenlager* no. 209
Katowice	Siemianowice Śląskie	*Polenlager* no. 10
Katowice	Kochłowice	*Polenlager* no. 7
	Opole Regency	
Racibórz	Racibórz—Strzelnica	*Polenlager* no. 75
Racibórz	Gorzyce	*Polenlager* no. 168
Racibórz	Gorzyczki	*Polenlager* no. 169
Racibórz	Beneš *	*Polenlager* no. 83
Racibórz	Pogrzebień	*Polenlager* no. 82
Głubczyce	Kietrz	*Polenlager* no. 92
Grodków	Otmuchów	*Polenlager* no. 86
Niemodlin	Korfantów	*Polenlager* no. 85

* Czechoslovakia

The *Polenlager* were not numbered successively, but were designated within the framework of the general numbering of *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* camps, as indicated by the established numbers of camps for German resettlers in Upper Silesia.

Almost all camp files were destroyed by the camp crews during the hasty evacuation. On the basis of accounts by witnesses and other evidence it has been established that the number of prisoners averaged 200 persons in the smaller camps and up to 1,200 persons in the larger ones, and underwent frequent changes.

The list of prisoners of the camp in Siemianowice Śląskie (*Polenlager* no. 10), the only one preserved, which can be regarded as representative of other camps, shows the following social stratification of inmates: peasants: 45.2 per cent; workers: 29 per cent; artisans: 5.4 per cent; white-collar workers: 3.4 per cent; others: 17 per cent.[113]

The camps for Poles were organized within a four-grade system, with the VoMi Main Office at the top and the camp command at the bottom. The intermediary links were the VoMi Operations Command for Upper Silesia (*Einsatzführung Oberschlesien*), epuipped with very broad powers, and the distric camp commands. The latter were indentified to have existed in Racibórz and Chorzów.

There is no doubt that the Nazis planned to expand the network of *Polenlager*. This is confirmed by preserved documents. However, the

camps that existed in 1942 and 1943 were not always sufficient for the attainment of current political objectives. For the number of prisoners frequently altered as a result of deportation for forced labour to the Reich, mortality, deportation of lone minors recognized as "racially valuable", signature of the *Volksliste*, which could affect release from the camp, and sporadically, resettlement to the General Government. There were also cases of prisoners being shot by the Gestapo.

The *Polenlager* were characterized by a high percentage of children and youth which reached, and sometimes exceeded, 40 per cent of the total number of prisoners. Such a considerable proportion of minors left its stamp on the camp community.

The preserved or reconstructed lists of prisoners show that in camp no. 92 in Kietrz there were 28.33 per cent of minors, and in camp no. 10 in Siemianowice Śląskie 39.41 per cent. On September 11, 1943, *Polenlager* no. 82 in Pogrzebień was turned into a children's camp, the only one among those camps.[114] Two hundred and twenty children aged two weeks to 16 years, including 12 infants, were staying in the camp. The infants were brought there alone; only the next day eight mothers arrived. Characteristically, the Nazis selected as the site of the children's camp the locality of Pogrzebień, where water was in short supply, as confirmed by correspondence conducted by the German authorities.

The only concern and aim of the parents and close relatives was to keep the children alive. This was possible only by obtaining, outside the camp, food necessary to supplement the camp diet. Severe punishment was inflicted for any attempts of this kind on the people living in the vicinity, and even more severe on prisoners.

For calling at a grocer's shop on his way to work, a prisoner, Stanisław Potyczka, was beaten up by the guards of the Czechowice camp and lay unconscious for a month. A young child which had taken its ration of milk to its mother and lined up once again was struck so strongly that it lost consciousness.[115]

The parents shared their food rations with their children, carrying bread, potatoes, carrots and fruit hidden under their clothes.

In the Korfantów camp, local inhabitants saw children stretch out their arms through the wire fence, begging for a piece of bread. The rare parcels from relatives were robbed or failed to reach the addressees at all.

Especially hard was the lot of lone children, but those who did have parents also felt the adults' helplessness in the struggle for survival. In case of illness, with medicines lacking, with dirt, vermin and cold, only the defensive power of the human organism could be relied upon. Only the camp personnel was inoculated against typhus and typhoid fever. Vaccine was lacking even for children, not to mention adults. *SS-Obersturmführer* Lechner, the commander of the VoMi Bureau for

Upper Silesia, expressed the view in an official document that Poles staying in the camps posed, from an epidemiological viewpoint, a much lesser danger to the German population than those remaining at large.

Especially tragic were moments when the parents had to watch the death of their children or when the children witnessed the killing of their parents or brothers and sisters.

Edward Potyczka, then several years old, has never forgotten the following scene, which took place in the Czechowice camp:[116]

The camp commandant, in the presence of other SS-men, notified us of the death of our mother from — as he put it — cancer. Next he led us to a corridor where my mother's body was lying in a wooden coffin, covered with a blanket. He drew the blanket back for a moment. My mother was 36 years old. I remember this because my father told me many times to remember this date and the fact that my mother had not died from cancer, but from hunger and emaciation.

Another tragedy was experienced by Maria Uroda, of Buczkowice, in the Kietrz camp:[117]

After several months in the camp, in December 1943, my mother gave birth to a daughter who was named Jadwiga. The baby died after five months, having suffered from serious diseases, such as ulcers and pneumonia. The death of little Jadzia in great pain was my first great tragedy. I cuddled the body of the infant and shouted: 'I won't give the baby.' She was buried in the local cemetery but her grave was not marked, so now it cannot be found.

Particularly grave was the situation of children who, as part of the *Aktion Oderberg*, were arrested in the Dąbrowa Basin on the night of August 11—12, 1943. The parents were sent to concentration camps, and the children, numbering about 200, were confined to the *Polenlager:* first in Pogrzebień and next, successively, in Łyski, Kietrz, Gorzyczki, Gorzyce, Beneš and, finally in Bohumin. From there the much fewer who remained were taken to the camp in Potulice.[118]

The local population soon saw for themselves that the camp prisoners were not "bandits and criminals", as German propaganda claimed, and started extending active aid to the Poles, above all in the form of food. Farmers, in strict secrecy, fed the prisoners working on their farms. When children were taken to work under the guard of a farm hand, it meant that they would receive food from the farmer, usually some milk and bread. The presence of a gendarme ruled out a meal.

In Pogrzebień children sometimes managed to get through the wire fence. Then they went to the local church, where bread was waiting for them on the benches, brought there by local inhabitants. All this, however, did not suffice to protect the weak organisms of children against gradual emaciation. Hence the greatest mortality in the camps was

among children and elderly people, the least resistant to the effects of camp life.

A farmer from Kocon, Żywiec district, who was imprisoned, together with his four children, in camp no. 10 in Siemianowice Śląskie, lost his two-year-old daughter Krystyna and one-year-old son Jan there. The children died after staying in the camp for ten months.

In January 1943, a woman and two children, aged about one and two, were brought to the camp. She was informed that her husband had blown up a train going from Cracow to Lublin. The mother was next taken to Auschwitz, while the children were left in the camp in Siemianowice Śląskie.[119]

The diet of minors, like that of adults, consisted of black coffee substitute and a slice of bread for breakfast, potatoes, cabbage, turnip, or beetroots, sometimes borsch, or so-called *Eintopf*, very rarely with a piece of meat, at noon and again coffee and bread in the evening. Little children received "children's food" (*Kinderessen*), which consisted of half a litre of skimmed milk and thin gruel boiled with water. Children were not allowed to eat at their place of work. At lunch time they were escorted back to the camp.

Work was compulsory for minors over 14 years of age, and in some camps over 12 years. Below that age work was voluntary. But even eight-year-olds volunteered for work, for it meant staying in the open air and sometimes better food. The children employed on farms had lighter work, whereas the working conditions in industrial plants were inhuman and work was excessively hard. Suffice it to quote a deposition by 14-year-old Danuta Uroda:

> While in the camp I worked in a dairy in Kietrz. I went to work at 3:15 a.m. and returned at dusk. I had dry bread for breakfast in the morning. At lunch time I was taken back to camp under escort. The working conditions in the plant were extremely difficult because I was employed as a stoker's mate, and once I was so exhausted that I fell down loading coal outside and could not stand up. After some time I was found, frozen, in the snow and rescued.

Her sister Maria, three years her junior, also worked very hard. This is what she recalls:

> I was 11 then and I had to work very hard outside the camp, first in a brick kiln where I carried and stacked bricks. Next I worked in a coal yard where I stacked briquettes. Later on I was sent to work for various persons in the town of Kietrz: in the local mill and in the cemetery... All the time I worked from 6 a.m. until at least 4 p.m. At times some German women workers in the factory secretly gave me something to eat during the lunch hour.[120]

A boy named Władek from camp no. 7 was killed in an accident while working for a farmer. He fell from a horse-drawn cart and was run

over by it. A girl named Zenobia from the same camp, who worked in a mine, was killed, run over by the mine trolleys.

The emaciation of youngsters through work was one of the planned methods of genocide in Nazi camps. Another form was physical and mental persecution of prisoners.

In all *Polenlager* there existed cells for solitary confinement, usually dark pillboxes with cement floor. In Siemianowice the solitary cell was housed in a former pigsty. The entrance was through an iron door with a small grating; when this was covered by a shutter, the cell became completely dark. Inside there was a bunk without any straw or a mattress. The prisoners were given food once a day or received no food at all.

Children were liable to punishment on an equal footing with adults, even for trifling offences. In the Siemianowice camp, a boy who was there with his father, a farmer from Ślemień, put up resistance to a *Lagerführer* during a beating. As a punishment, he was locked up in a cellar. He broke out and was imprisoned once again for several days. He was seen with his teeth knocked out. Next Sunday it was announced during the roll-call that the boy had been hanged in Mysłowice.[121]

The punishment of flogging was considered a "milder means of education". It was inflicted upon three boys, under 12 years of age, for having attempted to escape from the Rybnik camp. They were lined up along a wire fence and beaten by the camp commandant.

Zbigniew Romowicz, aged 12, who had not been quick enough in carrying out an order, was locked in a cellar in Kietrz, where he stayed for two days together with the bodies of four elderly women.[122]

Children, just like adults, were subject to collective responsibility. If a room was not clean enough, the punishment was inflicted on all occupants, irrespective of age, as was the case in the Gorzyczki camp, where prisoners were kept sitting stockstill in snow and frost for several hours.[123]

Organized education, in the sense of school instruction, did not, of course, exist. For some time in Pogrzebień children, in the absence of their mothers, were gathered in one of the larger rooms, where, under the care of a Polish teacher, they played and secretly learnt Polish songs. In Kietrz three Polish teachers taught children arithmetic and Polish poetry and songs. The lessons were held in cold, dirty rooms, with the children sitting on the floor. In the Gorzyczki camp two Polish teachers secretly taught children to read and write as well as geography.

Polenlager were centres of imprisonment and slave labour. Administered by the SS, they were destined exclusively for the Polish population, whole families as a rule, without any lower or upper age limits. They were set up in the territories incorporated in the Third Reich, in

the so-called Upper Silesian Province, after the inmates' property and workshops had been taken away. They served as an instrument of illegal confinement of unlimited duration, a tool for exerting pressure, applying political terror and collective responsibility, and the forced denationalization of selected Poles.

The *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* was indicted during the eighth Nuremberg trial as one of the four criminal institutions functioning within the SS. The verdict stated that the camps administered by the VoMi, in which many thousands had been imprisoned, did not substantially differ from concentration camps [124].

12. "EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS" IN THE UPPER SILESIAN PROVINCE

Specific methods of education were applied in Silesia with respect to boys under age who seemed good material for Germanization and could subsequently be drafted into the army. This end was served by institutions in Grodków, in the former Opole regency, and in Cieszyn which did not essentially differ from Nazi camps. They were directly subordinated to the State Office for Youth (*Landesjugendamt*) in Katowice, headed at that time by Alwin Brockmann, well known for his hostile attitude toward Poles.

The institution in Grodków bore the name State Educational Establishment (*Landes-Erziehungsanstalt — Dienststelle der Verwaltung Oberslesischen Provinzialverbandes*) and had two branches: in Nowa Mała Wieś and in Stary Grodków. Moreover, four commands, located in Blachownia, Koźle, Gliwice and Katowice, were subordinated to the Grodków institution. The number of youngsters in the main camp and the two branch camps averaged 600; in Blachownia there were 120 boys, in Koźle 50, in Gliwice 60 and in Katowice 30.

On the basis of detailed testimony by a former employee of the Grodków institution, Stefan Kałuża, it has been established that the inmates included children whose parents had been arrested, or sent to concentration camps, or refused to sign the *Volksliste*. There were also children who had used the Polish language in public, refused to attend a German school, or shown off their Polish nationality.

The regulations in force in the institution enjoined the use of German exclusively, although 40 to 60 per cent of the children did not know that language at all. Speaking Polish was punished by severe flogging in public, inflicted usually on Saturday evening or Sunday morning. Flogging was meted out even for the most trifling of offences, such as the theft of carrots, turnips, or the exchange of food for cigarettes. The children, who were practically prisoners, received from five to 25

lashes, with the punishment being cumulative in the case of more than one offence, so the flogging at times reached 100 lashes. Boys usually fainted after 25 lashes.

The Grodków institution housed boys aged eight to 19, divided into 14, and for some time 16, groups of 30, with an "educator" assigned to each group. The boys had three or four hours of classes each day, with the rest of the time being filled by hard work on the institution's farm of 350 hectares as well as in the kitchen, laundry and bakery.

Roll-calls were held twice daily: at 6:30 a.m. and at 7 p.m., i.e. after the end of work which started at 7 a.m. For breakfast the boys received a slice of brown bread with marmalade which they called *Hitlerspeck* (Hitler's bacon), another thin slice of plain bread and coffee substitute with saccharine. On weekdays the dinner consisted of one dish: a soup made of turnips, beetroots, cabbage, rape-seed, or nettles gathered by the boys on the farm. On Sundays a second dish followed, usually potatoes with gravy and a piece of meat. For supper there were potatoes, some cheese and coffee substitute.

The inmates were forbidden to wear their own clothes. Each boy was issued clothes of the same cut and colour in order to prevent getaways. Escapes did happen now and then, however, and the captured fugitives were sent to a prison in Wołów, whence they never returned to the institution. Their fate remained unknown.

The Grodków institution, which was unofficially called a juvenile prison, aimed at the Germanization of boys of Polish nationality, so that they could be drafted into the army after turning 17. If someone wanted to leave the institution sooner, he could voluntarily enlist in the army.

For major offences boys were locked up in the solitary cell in a cement pillbox. Henryk Kramarczyk, born in Katowice and 15 years old at that time, thus described the punishment inflicted by his "educators":

> Following interrogation I was taken back to solitary confinement from where I was dragged out each day to be questioned about the matter concerned. Each time I was beaten until I lost consciousness and thrown back into the cement cell. This went on for 10 days, i.e. until the moment I was dragged out unconscious, with double pneumonia and a high temperature. Beating was very common even for the most triffling offences. Many children left the institution crippled. The solitary cell was not suitable for human beings because it defied any sanitary regulations.[125]

From time to time the institution was visited by Alwin Brockmann. During his visits he selected 5—20 boys with fair hair and blue eyes. They left the institution in an unknown direction. One of the educators

intimated that "the boys are going into good hands and will be well off". A special medical commission also visited the institution to carry out "racial examinations".

There existed close ties between the Grodków institution and a similar institution on Frysztacka street in Cieszyn (now Czechoslovak Těšin). Part of the personnel trained in Grodków were sent to Cieszyn, where about 400 boys were held who were sometimes transferred to other camps.

The boys from Cieszyn were also sent as forced labour to the chemical works in Blachownia Śląska near Kędzierzyn. There they lived in barrack huts surrounded by barbed wire and were guarded by Wehrmacht soldiers. They had to work the way adults did, in dreadful conditions.

The stay in the Grodków and Cieszyn institutions left a durable imprint on the psyche of the young "charges". Perhaps no one will ever be able to establish how many of those who were drafted into the Wehrmacht were killed at the front for an alien and hostile cause.

13. NURSERIES, CAMPS AND "SHELTERS" FOR FOREIGN CHILDREN BORN IN GERMANY

Children born in Germany of mothers deported there on forced labour posed a serious problem to the Nazi administration. The scope of this problem is illustrated by the fact that in the first post-war years the German administration, complying with an order of the Allied occupation authorities, turned over about 40,000 birth certificates of Polish children from the American and British zones alone.

Orders issued by Heinrich Himmler and Leonardo Conti, the head of the Department of Health in the Ministry of Interior, enjoined compulsory abortion in all Polish and "Eastern" women when an examination of the father and the mother made it unlikely that a "racially valuable" child was to be born.

Gauleiter Fritz Sauckel, the Reich Plenipotentiary for Labour, issued an order on March 20, 1943, prohibiting pregnant "Eastern" women workers and Polish women to return to their home countries for the period of childbirth. At the same time hospitals and maternity clinics for the German population did not admit pregnant foreign women workers on the strength of a decree of Dr Leonardo Conti.

In the case of the birth of a "racially undesirable" child, it was put in a special nursery, camp, or "shelter", which, in conformity with Himmler's written order of October 9, 1942, were to bear "imposing names" to create an appearances of reliability. Hence they were referred to as collecting points for foreign children, maternity and children's homes for Poles, camps for foreign children, establishments for the care

for foreign children, etc. (*Kindersammelstätte für die Ausländische Kinder, Polen-Entbindungs- und Kinderheime, Ausländerkinderlager, Ausländerkinderpflegestätte*). Because of the lack of medical care and of even the most primitive sanitary installations, and above all due to the systematic and purposeful starvation of infants, these institutions became centres of mass annihilation.[126]

This aspect of the biological struggle with the conquered nations was not investigated thoroughly enough immediately after the end of hostilities, when it was still possible to gather concrete evidence of genocide. The evidence available today is scarce and fragmentary.

The above-mentioned institutions were organized either on separate premises administered by the NSDAP Head Office for Social Welfare or in camps for deported foreign workers, supervised by the German Work Front (*Deutsche Arbeits Front*, DAF) and proprietors et enterprises, or else on separate premises in the countryside for the children of women workers employed in farming.

The children's transfer to the institutions was obligatory; the mothers were not allowed to visit them, or could visit them only at long intervals.

More detailed data have been collected on the maternity centre in Brunswick at 200 Broitzenerstrasse, which was called *Entbindungsheim Broitzen*. The establishment, opened on the initiative of the German Work Front on May 10, 1943, functioned till the end of the war and was controlled by local political organizations which exercised general supervision over it.

The economic and financial management of the institution was the concern of the local Health Service, and from July 1944 of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Brunswick on behalf of which the establishment was managed by the firm Struck und Witte based in that town. The institution was housed in two barrack huts, one of which was devastated, while in the other expectant mothers and newly-born babies occupied three rooms only. In the remaining rooms the personnel of the institution set up a kitchen and washroom. Apart from the managers of the establishment, Karl Mose and Gertrude Becker, the personnel who were unqualified consisted of forced labourers. For some time the function of the establishment's physician was performed by Dr Sandor, a Czech, and later by Dr Grizemko, a Russian. Their role under existing conditions was necessarilly limited to ascertaining deaths.

The hygienic and sanitary conditions in the establishment were, according to Karl Möse's deposition during the investigation, "beyond description". There were no sheets; the blankets were louse-infested; dirty blankets were piled in a corner, with traces of infants' excrement on them; the barracks were dirty and bug-infested. The dead infants were removed to the washroom, where they lay for several days or even

longer, sometimes already decomposing, in margarine cartoons. From there they were taken to be incinerated or buried. Two disinfections of the barracks failed to remove the bugs, and infant mortality continued to be very high.

The mothers were sent back to work within eight to nine days after delivery and were forbidden to contact the baby, which was put in a separate barrack. Some mothers, aware of the fate that was awaiting their babies, took the new-born children with them, initially with the consent of the manageress and later secretly, without her consent. The DAF head, Mauersberg, then issued an order which compelled mothers to give up all children born both in the institution and outside it.[127] That is why for some time older children also stayed in the establishment. The aim of the order was, first of all, to remove any obstacles that would limit the productivity of mothers.

Kreisobmann Mauersberg and *Kreisleiter* Heilig, who supervised the establishment on behalf of the DAF, now and then carried out inspections which, however, were limited, as a rule, to issuing prohibitions, as was the case in November 1944, during an inspection of food supplies. The *Kreisleiter* then noticed a basket with 120—150 eggs sent to the establishment by the Food Office. Heilig ordered the basket to be taken to the local Nazi headquarters, saying: *Was, die sollen Eier essen? Unsere deutschen Mütter bekommen auch keine Eier* (What, they're going to have eggs? Our German mothers don't get eggs, either). Later he prohibited the issue of milk for new-born infants.[128]

During an investigation aimed at explaining the shocking mortality rate of infants and children, the German physicians formally responsible for the establishment during the war testified that this had been caused by a disease known as "hospitalismus". The disease, they explained, developed in consequence of bad or incompetent artificial feeding of infants, primitive hygienic and housing conditions in which babies, due to overcrowding, were more prone to infection, and as a result of the lack of qualified medical personnel.

The opinion of these physicians was intended to justify the criminal activity of the people responsible for the death of infants in the establishment.

In the first period, from May 1943 until July 1944, 174 of the 253 infants born in the establishment died.

In the period when the establishment was administered by the Struck und Witte firm, 154 infants died there. The lack of documentation from that period (it was destroyed, together with other documents of that firm at the end of the war) makes it impossible to establish the exact number of deaths, the only available data being those obtained from the files of the registry office. The managress, Gertrude Becker, explained to the Allied authorities that, of the total number of 800 infants

born in the Brunswick establishment, 400 had died, including 200 Polish and 200 Russian and Ukrainian children. In the last period almost every baby died.

The cause of infant mortality is explained by a secret letter of the NSDAP Head Office for Social Welfare of August 11, 1943, signed by SS-*Gruppenführer* Hilgenfeldt and addressed to Heinrich Himmler, concerning supplies for foreign children staying in a similar institution in Spital am Phyrn, called *Säuglingsheim für Säuglinge und Kleinkinder von Ostarbeiterinnen in Spital am Phyrn.*[129]

Here are the key fragments of that document:

I found out during an inspection that all infants in the shelter were under-fed. As *SS-Oberführer* Langoth [head of the NSDAP district welfare office] told me, on the basis of a decision of the provincial food office, the shelter is allotted only half a litre of full-cream milk and half a lump of sugar for each infant daily. On such rations the infants must die of malnutrition. I was informed that there existed a difference of opinions as regards the upbringing of these infants. Some believe that the children of Eastern women workers ought to die, others — that they should be brought up. As no unanimous standpoint has as yet been adopted and, as I was told, 'it is necessary to keep up appearances with respect to Eastern women workers', the infants are allotted insufficient food rations, on which they must die within a few months' time... There exist two possibilities: either we do not want to keep the children alive, and then they must not be annihilated gradually, as this takes away many litres of milk from the nation's diet, and there are other ways of doing it without torment and painlessly. Or else the children are to be reared and later used as labour force. In this case they should be fed enough food to become fully valuable workers in the future... I request you, dear *Reichsführer SS*, to concern yourself with this matter and make a fundamental decision. This is necessary also because it is planned to establish shortly a nursery for children of Eastern women workers since the establishment in Spital am Phyrn, with 62 infants, is already overcrowded and cannot admit any more babies.[130]

Heinrich Himmler's reply to this letter is unknown, but the further activity of institutions of this kind indicates that nothing changed. The fate of the children who survived is not known, either. The only available information is that about 200 mothers snatched their children from the NSV clinic as US troops were approaching.

The camp for Polish children and the maternity establishment in Laberweiting *(Polenkinderlager und Entbindungsheim Laberweiting)* were founded in August 1944 by the *Kreisleiter* of the Rottenburg district, Mendler. The camp housed Polish children and women workers from the Mellersdorf and Rottenburg districts.

The sanitary installations and living conditions in the camp were similar to those existing in the Brunswick establishment. Immediately after the foundation of the camp, 25 children were transferred there from an establishment in Mallersdorf, and 14 of them died in that

very month. Of the total of 60 to 70 children born in Laberweiting, 40 died in the camp.

The only source of information about a centre for infants called *Säuglingsstation Voerde-West* is a deposition of the head of the Voerde-West labour camp, Lorenz Schneider.[131] He took over the camp in April 1944, at which time an infant centre was opened, for the newly born children of Eastern women workers. The number of children rose from 35 to 138 in August of that year. From October 1944 until January 1945 about 50 children aged between one and eight months died, which was more than 40 per cent. More than half of those children died of malnutrition, which in death certificates was referred to as general emaciation *(allgemeine Schwäche)*.

Lorenz Schneider said that he had been "frightened by the great number of children dying each day" and supposed that there was some plan to let these children die. The Ukrainian camp physician, Dr Kolesnik, told him that the mortality rate was caused by lack of milk, fats and other nutrients. The children were born weak because their mothers were not entitled to any extra food during pregnancy. For its part, the Krupp concern did not conduct any investigation into the high infant mortality rate, although its representatives were informed about it.

Information on a centre for foreign infants at Velpke known as *Kinderheim Velpke* was supplied by German inhabitants of that locality. The establishment was founded in April 1944 and was supervised by the NSDAP *Kreisleiter*. Children were put in the nursery compulsorily. In June 1944, there were 54 infants of Polish and, presumably, other nationalities in the establishment. The total number of children that stayed there has not been established; it is only known that from May 10 until December 25, 1944, 84 children died. The most frequently cited causes of death were "gastroenteritis" and general emaciation.

The role played by this nursery is shown by the history of an eight-month-old Polish child, Brunon, the son of Weronika Plutkacka. The mother, fearful for the life of little Brunon, did not want to put him in the nursery and hid him in June 1944 with a German woman named Emma Hoppe in Velpke. After three days the local burgomaster, Noeth, and NSDAP *Ortsgruppenleiter* Müller visited her and, threatening, demanded that she give up the baby. When she took the child to the nursery, Emma Hoppe left a bottle of milk for him. The next day she found out, however, that the child had not received the milk. He was lying in a common room, on a terribly dirty mattress, with nobody looking after him. Three weeks later, when the mother learnt that her son was ill and wanted to visit him, she was not allowed to. Within two weeks Brunon Plutkacki died, and his mother was notified of his death only after the funeral.[132]

In the establishment for children in Burgkirchen/Alz, 152 children born of deported women workers died in the period from May 1944 until May 1945.[133]

Hundreds of infants, children of Eastern women workers, were born in the camp for pregnant women in Pfaffenwald Kreis Hersfeld. Their fate is, however, unknown.

The fragments of evidence concerning several known "care" centres for foreign children born in the Third Reich, above all the children of Polish mothers brought there as forced labour, combine to form a shocking picture. The children were doomed to extermination or forced labour, or, if they managed to survive and were "racially good", to compulsory Germanization.

14. CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE MENTAL HOSPITAL IN LUBLINIEC

The German health service also took part in the extermination of children, with German physicians playing a decisive role, in the implementation of the so-called euthanasia programme.

Hitler introduced the questions of eugenics in the NSDAP programme in July 1933. A law was then passed regarding protection against the hereditary transmission of mental illness which sanctioned the "mercy killing" of incurable mental patients and, at the same time, offered a pretext for exterminating races regarded as "less valuable".[134] An example is provided by the crimes committed in Lubliniec.

In September 1939 the Polish State Hospital for Mental and Nervous Patients at 48 Grunwaldzka street in Lubliniec was renamed *Landes-Heil-und Pflegänstalt*. The management of the institution was entrusted, on September 17, 1939, to a German physician, Dr Ernst Buchalik.

In the second half of 1942 a *Jugend-Psychiatrische Klinik* was set up at the hospital. It consisted of two wards: A — diagnostic and B — therapeutic. At that time, the first group of about 20 children arrived in Lubliniec, probably from Saxony. Successive groups came from Germany, Central Poland and Silesia. They included children of both sexes ranging in age from one to 14 years, with children over seven in the majority, though there were cases of hospitalized children under one year of age, as well as 16- or even 18-year-olds.

All the children arriving at the hospital were directed to ward A. There they underwent psychiatric observation, examination and treatment for several months. The final diagnosis divided them into those minimally handicapped or difficult to bring up and those affected by acquired or innate dementia. The latter were transferred, as a rule, to ward B, where most of them were killed. Of the 256 little patients

of that ward, 194 died, which is about 76 per cent. The very fact of such a high mortality rate makes one suspect the unnatural character of those deaths.

Thanks to a notebook, found after the war, entitled *Medizin-Kinder-Abteilung B,* kept by the medical personnel of the ward, it has been established that in the period before their deaths the children received phenobarbital compounds, administered orally in the form of Luminal. The patients received doses totalling from 0.1 to 165 g of Luminal.[135]

The notebook contains tables with columns indicating the doses of drugs administered. The horizontal headings specify the dates, while the vertical ones the names of patients. The first dose was recorded on August 15, 1942, and the last one on October 31, 1944. In all cases, the doses of barbiturates administered to the children were two, three or even four times as large as the therapeutic dose. Each time death occurred immediately after administering the last dose.

For example, Henryk Zielonka, aged 10, received a dose of 0.13 g or more than double the admissible therapeutic daily dose of 0.3 g. He died after 10 days. Jan Labuda, aged five, received a dose triple the admissible therapeutic dose. He died after 10 days.

All circumstances indisputably show the existence of a direct causal relationship between the administration of barbiturates and the deaths of the children. It is clear that the application of excessive doses of Luminal caused protracted poisoning and gradual destruction of the organism until pathologic complications appeared, which finally led to death. Two Polish physicians, Dr Kazimiera Marxen and Dr Hipolit Latyński, who, after the war, attempted to reconstruct the working of the Lubliniec clinic, thus describe the "treatment":

> Barbituric compounds, above all Luminal, were administered in large doses, from 0.1 to 0.6 g daily, regardless of age. The children reacted to Luminal in various ways. The stronger, better fed ones were more resistant than the smaller and weaker. Some children received large doses of Luminal for weeks and months, and in spite of this stayed alive... The weaker ones died after a short time, sometimes even after a few days. Initially all children vomited after they had been administered Luminal; later some apparently got used to it, others staggered and seemed intoxicated... Still others reacted more strongly, were half asleep all the time, lay pale and inert; they were only woken up to have some food. After some time they started running a high fever, stopped eating, wheezed and foam, sometimes blood, appeared at the mouth, until finally then died.[136]

It is characteristic that neither the official files of the establishment nor the patients' individual records indicate the administration of barbiturates. For example, Marianna Neumann's record, under the date of January 16, 1943, mentions only the application of 0.1 g of Luminal, or in other words the dose which she should have received therapeuti-

cally, in proportion to her weight. Meanwhile, according to the above-mentioned notebook, she received 0.4 g of Luminal on that day. From October 26, 1942, until January 15, 1943, she was administered such a dose each day. Similar facts are revealed in another 10 cases.

The German documents purport to show that all children killed were irreversibly handicapped mentally or physically. The documents recorded five cases of epilepsy, 134 cases of idiocy (also referred to as dementia) and two cases of palsy (without a closer definition). Moreover, in some children combinations of several diseases were discovered, for example epilepsy, idiocy and deformation of the body; epilepsy, idiocy and palsy; open tuberculosis, acquired dementia and inhibition of mental development.

In all cases the diagnoses ended with the conclusion that the child's condition did not offer prospects for any improvement in the future, in other words, that the child was incurably ill and unable to live on its own. Some diagnoses were supplemented with remarks on the subject of the child's "asocial traits".

A comparison of the above findings with the actual state of affairs arouses many doubts. During an investigation conducted by the District Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Katowice, the following, among other things, was established:

Henryk Szczubidło was described as afflicted with acquired dementia, but notes on his behaviour only show that he was insolent, naughty and "...speaks only Polish".

In Fryderyka Horak hereditary dementia was diagnosed, but this is not confirmed by other documents which mention only tuberculosis. Besides, the child had attended school before she was put in the Lubliniec clinic.

Jerzy Redlich is the only person alive who, as a child, was a patient of ward B. He owes his life to one of the nurses who secretly did not administer him the prescribed doses of Luminal. Today he works as a driver, has a wife and two healthy children. He only shows a slight speech impediment and complains about back pains.[137]

The very fact that the official files of the hospital misrepresent the real doses of Luminal administered to children testifies that the personnel realized the criminal character of their activity and attempted to conceal it.

From testimony by witnesses (the parents of children who died in Lubliniec) it appears that in a number of cases children were put in the hospital without their parents' consent, by way of administrative constraint. In other cases the parents agreed to the hospitalization of their children, convinced that they would receive treatment. Characteristic is the testimony of Maria Gawlik, who says that when she was ordered by the authorities to put her child in the Lubliniec establish-

ment, a German clerk who settled the formalities told her: "Too bad for your son".

Looking for an answer to the question, why the notebook recording the exact dosage of barbiturates was kept at all, one may suggest the hypothesis that the aim was to develop the most effective method for the veiled killing of children.

NOTES

[1] C. Łuczak, *"Kraj Warty"* 1939—1945, Poznań 1972, p. 19.

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[3] IMT, doc. USSR-170.

[4] United Nations Information Organization, *Today's Children Tomorrow's Hope. The Story of Children in the Occupied Lands,* London 1945, p. 40.

[5] Documenta Occupationis (hereafter Doc. Occup.), Poznań 1945, vol. I, p. 63, memorial: *Die Bedeutung des Polen — Problems für die Rüstungswirtschaft Oberschlesien.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] KC PZPR Archive, sygn. 202/I, vol. XXXIV, "Memoriał o sytuacji dzieci w Polsce".

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] C. Madejczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce,* Warszawa 1970, vol. II, p. 86; C. Łuczak, op. cit., vol. II, p. 53.

[10] KC PZPR Archive, op. cit.

[11] C. Madajczyk, op. cit., vol. II, p. 55.

[12] H. Picker,*Hitlers Tischgespräche in Führerhauptquartier 1941-1942,* Bonn 1951, p. 115.

[13] Paper delivered at a UNESCO conference in Trogen, Switzerland, in July 1948: *On the Situation of Polish Children during the German Occupation.*

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[19] VBl GG, 1939, no. 6.

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[22] *Hitlerowskie obozy śmierci na ziemiach polskich. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny,* Warszawa 1978.

[23] *Wspomnienia Polaków wysiedlonych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego z ziem polskich tzw. wcielonych do Rzeszy.* Introduction by C. Łuczak, Poznań 1974.

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[25] C. Łuczak, *Polscy robotnicy przymusowi w III Rzeszy podczas II wojny światowej*, Poznań 1974, p. 58; "Okupacja i ruch oporu" w Dzienniku Hansa Franka 1939—1945, Warszawa 1970, vol. I, p. 512.

[26] A. Speer, *Wspomnienia*, Warszawa 1973, p. 309.

[27] W. Rusiński, *Położenie robotników polskich w czasie wojny 1939—1945 na terenie Rzeszy i "obszarach wcielonych"*, parts 1 and 2, Poznań 1950—1955; Ostdeutscher Beobachter no. 205-A, July 27, 1944.

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[31] "Walka biologiczna III Rzeszy z narodem polskim", Biuletyn GKBZHwP, 1947, vol. II, pp. 129—137; H. Gawadzki, "Liban — obóz karny służby budowlanej", Biuletyn GKBZHwP, 1951, vol. VI, pp. 133—167.

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[34] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

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[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 87, 96.

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 102.

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[51] AGK, 187Z, vol. I, p. 51.

[52] *Ibid.*, sygn. 1872, vol. I.

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[114] R. Hrabar, op. cit., pp. 65—66.
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[133] IMT materials, Arolsen, IMT, records of Case VIII of Ulrich Greifelt.

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3

Abduction and Germanization

The abduction and Germanization of Polish children were elements of the biological struggle aimed at the annihilation of the Polish nation and, at the same time, at increasing the biological strength of the German nation. This aim was to be achieved through the forced and insidious Germanization of Polish children recognized as valuable according to the Nazis' anti-human and anti-scientific racial criteria.

The course and intensity of the abduction and Germanization campaign were different in various regions of Poland. However, they were subordinated to the same supreme principles, governed by the same general regulations and controlled by the same authorities. At this point, it is necessary to outline some general and fundamental differences which were the outcome of the different — and often contradictory — policies of the German authorities toward the Polish population in a given region.

The campaign of abduction and Germanization was most advanced in Great Poland and the Łódź region, as well as in Pomerania, where most of the Germanization camps were located (among other places, in Bruczków, Kalisz, Kobylin, Ludwików and Puszczykowo). Abduction was preceded by a wide-scale process of selection which comprised an appraisal of "race", character and abilities and embraced children from all social strata. The campaign started in Polish children homes and was later extended to cover children reared by foster parents, with only one parent and children born out of wedlock. Following the initial period of Germanization, the children were deported to the Reich.

In Silesia, where the whole population was regarded as German, the campaign of Germanization proceeded within the framework of an overall policy which also comprised the German national list *(Volksliste)*. Consequently, the Germanization campaign did not include deportation to Germany, but was limited to bringing Polish establishments for children under German control and taking children away from foster parents and those parents who refused to sign the *Volksliste*. Mass deportation of children from establishments to the Reich did not occur until evacuation, as the eastern front was approaching. Following the foundation of the so-called Upper Silesian Province, the Nazis attempt-

ed, by means of pressures and threats, to force Polish families, especially those with children, to sign the *Volksliste*. Pressure was also brought to bear in camps for the Polish population organized by the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*.

In Pomerania, Germanization by way of signing the *Volksliste* proceeded alongside "selection"; both methods involved taking children away from parents and putting them under the care of German families in the Reich or in Pomerania.

Moreover, the Germanization campaign embraced almost all children born in the Reich of Polish women workers. In this case, too, it was founded on the "selection" of children, and prior to their birth, of their parents.

In the General Government, the selection of Polish children and their deportation to Germany began late, nonetheless, the Nazis managed to deport many thousands of Polish youngsters. They never missed an opportunity to appropriate a child, and such opportunities arose during large-scale expulsion and pacification operations, in the course of evacuation and during street round-ups. A case in point here is the mass-scale deportation to the Reich of children from the Zamość region. Germanization proceedings, similar to those applied in the incorporated territories but on a much smaller scale, also embraced children of executed hostages, children from institutions run by Protestant communities and children of persons who refused to acknowledge their German nationality.

1. DIRECTIVES FOR THE ABDUCTION AND GERMANIZATION OF CHILDREN

The planned campaign of abduction and Germanization was initiated and organized, on Hitler's authorization, by Heinrich Himmler as the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom. The principal aim, as defined by the political programme of the Third Reich, was the strengthening of the German nation and state at the expense of the biological, economic and cultural annihilation of conquered nations, headed by the Polish nation. The abduction of Polish children constituted an integral and important part of that programme.

The campaign had been planned centrally, with premeditation and full awareness of its criminal character. This is shown not only by the manner of its implementation, but also by the underlying directives, the most important of which included:

— a document, drafted at the NSDAP Racial Political Office and dated November 25, 1939, concerning the special treatment of children recognized as "racially valuable";[1]

— Heinrich Himmler's letter of May 15, 1940, on "The Treatment of Foreign Tribes in the East", which provided for annual "selections of all children of six to ten years of age in the General Government and their segregation into racially valuable and worthless".[2]

— Heinrich Himmler's address to high-ranking SS officers in Zhitomir on September 16, 1942, ordering "the winning for Germany of all good blood, or its destruction, so that it does not remain on the enemy's side".[3]

The first two documents concerned Polish territories and Polish children. The third one, albeit it refers, above all, to Soviet children only, modifies the directives concerning all Slav children (*Ostkinder*), and thus also Polish children.

The decrees of the German authorities responsible for deportation created a new legal situation with regard to children and their parents or foster parents, but were not based on the regulations hitherto in force and were not promulgated in any official gazettes. Many of those "normative" acts contained "secret" or "confidential" clauses, or explicit reservations that they were not to be announced publicly. Irrespective of their implementation, the very content of these decrees, orders and circulars, which stemmed directly from the afore-mentioned directives, stamps them as criminal acts. Their secret character is one more proof of the conscious criminal activity of the legislators.

2. POLISH CHILDREN OR CHILDREN OF GERMAN DESCENT?

The defendants in Case VIII before the First US Military Tribunal in Nuremberg attempted to explain that abduction had affected not Polish children, but German orphans and children of German descent.

To support their claims, they cited, first of all, decrees, circulars and correspondence which allegedly did not mention Polish children. In fact, however, these documents most often referred to "Eastern children" (*Ostkinder*) or children considered to "lend themselves to Germanization" (*eindeutschungsfähige*), although clearly misleading descriptions were not lacking, such as "children of German descent" (*Kinder deutscher Abstammung or deutschstämmige Kinder*). "Polonized German children" (*polonisierte deutsche Kinder*) and "German orphans" (*deutsche Waisen Kinder or Volksdeutsche bindungslose Kinder*). Instead of referring to Germanization, the documents spoke about "re-Germanization" *(Wiedereindeutschung).*

For the Germans attempted to justify the crime of abduction or deportation of Polish children not before the world, but also before their own society. The most characteristic was the attempt to substan-

tiate the German descent of children by Ulrich Greifelt in his decree no. 67/I.[4]

The falseness of Greifelt's claims is testified to by documents and testimony by witnesses quoted in the further chapters of this book. The disguising, camouflaging role of these assertions is also evident when one compares them with Heinrich Himmlers' letter of June 18. 1941, and finally follows from the contradictions contained in decree no. 67/I. Claiming that "the Poles systematically put orphans from German families in Polish orphanages",[5] Greifelt cited the results of some vague investigation and, at the same time, declared that there was no evidence regarding the descent of these children. What is more, he warned that no information about those children should leak to the public. There is no doubt that had the Germans had any grounds for their assertion of a "systematic Polonization of German children", they would have made use of them for propaganda purposes.

In decree no. 67/I, Ulrich Greifelt maintained that "German children were given Polish names". First of all, the Germans did not discover the allegedly true name of a child in even a single case, secondly, as regards abducted children who returned to Poland, all documents have been preserved, testifying to their Polish descent and showing the history of their deportation to Germany.

What the narrow circle of insiders really thought about the descent of these children is illustrated by the statements quoted below:

I, Dr Erich Schulz, declare under oath the following:

1. In late 1942 or early 1943, I discussed in great detail the question of the children from the *Warthegau* with Dr Tesch. Dr Tesch asked me whether I had ever examined the records of those children. When I said no, he told me to bring from the registry office the record of some child from the *Warthegau*, because he wanted to discuss these matters with me once and for all. Having examined the record, we found out that it was not sufficient to guarantee the German descent of the child. We agreed that the adoption of those children by German families was impossible. Besides, I drew Dr Tesch's attention to the fact that, from a legal point of view, even the deportation of those children to Germany could easily be interpreted as kidnapping [*Menschenraub*]. I also pointed out that complications were inevitable in such a case and said that I could not understand how the *Lebensborn* could accept such children and want to turn them over to German families.

2. Around April 1943, in the presence of Dr Tesch, I talked with Sollmann about the children from the *Warthegau*. I pointed out to him that, under para. 26 of the German law on civil status, he was officially responsible for establishing in each and every case the actual status of those children. Their records contained in most cases nothing more than the first name and surname and the date of birth, and many of the records failed to designate the place whence the child had been taken. No records contained data concerning the place of birth or mentioned nationality. Some of the names were Polish.

3. I know, however, that in spite of repeated warnings children from the *Warthegau* continued arriving and were turned over to German families.[6]

I, Franz Vetz, declare under oath the following:

„I know from talks at the Main Office (RuSHA) in Berlin that there was a shelter in Puszczykowo where Polish children were brought up in the German spirit. If I remember well, I was informed of the foundation of the shelter near Poznań by Dongus, who looked after such children before turning them over after some time to the Reich, to German families willing to adopt them. They were Polish children recognized as racially valuable.[7].

Decree no. 67/I and the above-quoted depositions refer only to Polish children from the *Warthegau*. As regards Polish children abducted or deported from the General Government or born in the Reich, the Germans did not even attempt to disguise their Polish nationality, and based themselves exclusively on the criterion of "racial value".

In order to reconcile the mass-scale abduction of Polish children and children from other Slav nations with the official theory of the exclusive value of the "German race", and to allow these children to be considered as being of German nationality or German race, a reversed criterion of "racial evaluation" was applied. The principle that "German blood is valuable" was replaced with the thesis that "a valuable child is obviously a German child or at least a child of German descent". As the value of a child was determined not only on the basis of Nazi "racial evaluation", but also as a result of medical examination and observation of its skills and character, valuable Polish children fell victim to the Germanization campaign.

The Germans changed the deported children's names, dates and places of birth, forbade them to use their mother tongue, compelled them to join Nazi youth organizations and covered up the evidence of their crimes by, for example, opening separate registration offices for children affected by the Germanization campaign.

There were some exceptions from the racial criterion, but on the whole it was decisive. Race was determined within a system of 11 racial types and two indefinite categories referred to as positive and negative. The forms used for recording the results of examinations contained as many as 62 points. They specified in detail the size and shape of the various parts of the body and the colour of hair and eyes. Enclosed with the forms were photographs in three poses. The forms sometimes contained absurd statements, e.g. that the upper part of the nose corresponds to a different racial type than the lower part.

Heinrich Himmler saw only two choices open to the parents of a child of "good blood": either they must give up the child or move to the Reich as "loyal citizens of the state".

According to the German plans, all children — those living in Germany as well as those in the so-called incorporated territories and in the General Government — were to undergo selection within the framework of the abduction and Germanization campaign. The plan

Concentration Camps

Yet another transport of those condemned to death on the railway platform at Auschwitz-Birkenau. On the way there they were told by the guards that they were going to a labour camp where they would be interned until the end of the war

SS staff seeing to the efficient unloading of a transport

On the way to the gas chambers

Children are accompanying adults

Some children were not killed im
diately. They were sent to do hard, sl
labour. Their photos were taken for
camp files and some of them were
tooed. Some of the files have been p
served and are now kept at the S
Museum at Oświęcim:

Wenzel Bobrowski, a Pole brought to
camp from Radom on September 1, 1
His later fate is unknown

Katarzyna Kwoka, a Pole brought to
camp from Zamość on December 13, 1
Murdered with a phenol injection thro
the heart on February 6, 1943

Ivan Rebatka, a Russian brought
Auschwitz from Katowice on August
1942, killed with a phenol injec
through the heart on March 1, 1943

Krystyna Trześniewska, a Pole brou
to the camp from Zamość on Decem
13, 1942, killed by a phenol injec
through the heart on March 1, 1943

Pol. 62766
KLAuschwitz
Pol. 26947
KLAuschwitz
Pol.R 60308
KLAuschwitz
27129
Auschwitz

An old woman and a child, two who succeeded in escaping death

The Bergen-Belsen concentration camp after the liberation

was effected in part during the occupation. The Germans never missed an opportunity to abduct and deport children for the purpose of Germanization. One such opportunity was offered by the taking over of children's homes and the selection of foster parents. Preparatory work began in Bydgoszcz and Łódź as early as 1939. In Bydgoszcz, the local branch of the *Lebensborn* which was in charge of the campaign sent children to an institution called "Pommern" in Połczyn near Szczecin.

A report found on the premises of the Łódź Health Department, covering the period from February 15 until September 30, 1941, includes the following comments:

Apart from the 1940 racial tests of Poles to be deported for forced labour to the Old Reich (*Altreich*) and serial tests of 1,139 persons of Czech nationality last spring, all Polish children from municipal institutions for children and foster homes were examined in terms of race. These orders, which, after adequate experience has been gained, ought to lead to the Germanization of racially valuable children of foregin nationalities, will... be made uniform for the whole Reich by the Ministry of Interior in consultation with the relevant offices of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom. In the course of this campaign, 292 children have so far been examined from the viewpoint of race. 110 of them, embraced by the above-mentioned selection, were subjected to trial Germanization on the basis of their racial traits. They included mainly children from Polish foster homes and a smaller number of children from institutions.[8]

The "uniform orders for the whole Reich", referred to in the above-quoted report, were contained in Greifelt's decree of February 19, 1942, and a circular of the Minister of Interior of March 11 of that year. Below are excerpts from a study of the state of the Germanization campaign at that time drawn up by *SS-Obersturmführer* Arthur Harders, of the Racial Office in the SS Race and Settlement Head Office, entitled: "A Review of the Scope of Work of Department C. 2 (Re-Germanization), as of September 25, 1942":

12. Foreign Children Born out of Wedlock.

The Reich Main Security Office is now registering foreign children born out of wedlock. The Race and Settlement Head Office is thereby included in the campaign to determine the racial value of the parents and, at the appropriate time, also of the children. The registration stage already offers some opportunities to weed out undesirable elements.

13. Foregin Orphans.

Children from Polish orphanages considered to lend themselves to Germanization are now being taken from there and, following examination of their character during a stay of several weeks at the children centre (Bruczków), are turned over for the purpose of Germanization. The same procedure is envisaged for the *Warthegau* and the Silesian District. A children's centre is also to be founded in the Gdańsk-Western Prussia District and another one in Upper Silesia. To this end, in order to concentrate in our hands not only racial examinations, but also character and psychological tests, and thus prevent other offices from taking a hand in the eval-

uation of a child's fitness for Germanization, it is necessary for the Race and Settlement Head Office to appoint an inspector responsible for the appraisal of character and selection in all children's centres. For its part, the SS Central Staff Office promised to transfer its powers to the SS Race and Settlement Head Office if we placed that inspector at its disposal. In this connection, it is the task of the Führer for race and settlement at the branch (*R.u.S.-Führer bei der Aussenstelle*) to take up the selection of children lending themselves to Germanization from a racial viewpoint. The Germanization of names is the task of the Führer for race and settlement or of the relevant branch [9].

It should be stressed that, contrary to Ulrich Greifelt's decree and Arthur Harders's report, the children taken away from Polish institutions and Polish foster homes included not only orphans and deserted children, but also children who had relatives or even parents to look after them. This fact seems to indicate that, irrespective of written orders and instructions, the executors of the Germanization programme received direct oral explanations and instructions which related to Heinrich Himmler's directives. Aside from this minor inconsistency, the Germanization campaign in the *Warthegau* proceeded in accordance with decree no. 67/I. Below are some examples:

In 1940 four boys, all of us fair haired, were taken from the Sienkiewiczówka orphanage to the Health Department for examination. Immediately afterwards we were transferred to the local shelter on Przędzalnicza street. There our blood was tested, all parts of the body, the head, etc., measured, our hair, skin, etc. examined. Eventually, I was taken to Bruczków. About 70—80 children were already there, aged from three upwards. While in Bruczków, we were taught German and forbidden to speak Polish. After several weeks, some of the children were taken to Luxembourg, some to Ludwików, and I was sent back to Łódź. There I was again examined from the viewpoint of race. Eventually, I returned to Bruczków, from where after six weeks I was moved to Regendorf in Niederaltreich. There I spent a year and a half at an SS school. Apart from learning German, we practised crossing rivers, shooting, running, etc., and carrying heavy stones. The exercises were designed both to improve skills and increase strenght. Going to church and speaking Polish were punished by flogging and deprivation of food. After this education we were transferred to Salzburg. There, at the Lager, I met boys and girls who had arrived from Ludwików and Luxembourg. We were told that we would be Germans from then on, and we were given new names. Everyone received an identity card with the new name. Later we were assigned to farmers. I worked for a farmer until the end of the war. I was told to address the farmer and his wife as 'father' and 'mother' in order to forget more quickly that I came from another country. My name was to be Johann Suhling instead of Jan Sulisz.[10]

In 1942 my brother and his wife were deported from Łódź to the General Government, while their child remained in a 'children's home' on Lokatorska street. She was a girl named Helena Fornalczyk, born in 1930. I saw my niece being transferred to the children's home for German children on Przędzalnicza street. I tried to get her out of there, because her mother had asked me to. At that time, my brother was already dead. At the Welfare Department, I was refused permission

to take my niece on the grounds that the child was 'racially valuable', that she would be wasted working on a farm, etc. I repeated my attempts for several days; eventually, I was told that my niece had departed, but they refused to give me her address. A year later, I think my niece wrote to me; she was then staying in Aachen, attending a school for *Volksdeutsche*. I don't know what happened to her, because our correspondence ceased. In one of the letters she asked me to address letters to her as Helena Former, because that was her new name [11].

My daughter Alicja Maria Sosińska, when she was seven years old, i.e. in 1941, was taken away from a woman who was bringing her up. I tried to regain the child through the Social Walfare Department, but they told me that my daughter was regarded as 'racially valuable', that they would return her after the war. Besides, they did not want to talk with me at all, although I repeated that she was my own child. I know that in 1942 she was moved to Kalisz. I have no idea what happened to her later [12].

In the territory of Silesia and partly of Pomerania, the Germanization of children in welfare institutions was effected, above all, by means of introducing German management and personnel, without applying the procedures provided for in decree no. 67/I. Polish institutions were taken over by the National Socialist Social Welfare organization (NSV), not only as part of the establishment of German administrative organs throughout those territories following their incorporation in the Reich, but also in the course of an organized campaign for the Germanization of Polish children. A document has been preserved, which illustrates the implementation of these plans in Silesia:

April 28, 1943

DR. A/Eb.

Subject: Polish children considered to lend themselves to Germanization
Re: inquiry by the head of the Head Office for Social Welfare in the NSV, *Hauptgemeinschaftleiter* Artur Wurst
Documents attached: —

R.u.S. *Führer im Oberabschnitt Süd-Ost*
SS-Standartenführer Scholz
Breslau
Ebereschen-Allee 17

Dear Colleague Scholz,

Perhaps you recollect our numerous talks concerning the Germanization of children from Polish orphanages. As a result of these talks, you carried out an inspection of children. However, the Germanization has not as yet been completed.

During that time, the children passed through NSV centres and were totally absorbed by the German community in terms of both language and culture, and were assigned posts where they were to undertake their year-long compulsory state service.

At present. the registry authorities or their organs call in question the German nationality of these children.

According to the respective decree of the *Reichsführer SS* you are the only person competent to take a decision in this matter...

I would be very grateful to you if, during your next visit to Upper Silesia, we could talk this question over at a conference to which I would also invite the head of the Head Office.

With best greetings,
Yours sincerely,
(Dr Arlt)
SS-Obersturmbannführer u. Stabsführer [13]

In January 1941, the NSV took over St. Joseph's orphanage at 56 Nowokościelna street in Tychy near Pszczyna. About 60 Polish children were resident in the institution, largely orphans, and children born out of wedlock aged from three months to 18 years. The first step was the dismissal of the Polish personnel. Next the children were divided into three groups: the less able, medium able and most able. The medium able, numbering about 30 (along with children from the orphanage in Pszczyna which had also been closed down), were taken to a German NSV establishment in Bielsko, the most able were temporarily left in Tychy, while the girls were transferred to Gliwice. The infants were moved to Miechowice, while the children described as less able left for an unknown destination, probably for the General Government. The orphanage was turned into an establishment for *Hitler-Jugend* boys. Early in the year, the whole establishment, in which about 40 boys (including a group of the brightest boys transferred from Bielsko) was moved to Gablenz in Germany.

The same lot was shared by children from the institutions of Dr Mielęcki in Katowice and of Father Markiewka in Katowice-Bogucice. Early during the occupation, the NSV took over the administration of those establishments, prohibited the use of the Polish language, and enforced the Nazi salute and the obligation to learn German songs. Dr Mielęcki's institution was closed down on February 18, 1941, and the children staying there, aged three to 15, with younger ones in the majority, were transferred to Father Markiewka's establishment in Bogucice. After the merger, the number of inmates of the Bogucice institution rose to some 500 children ranging in age from three to 18. In October 1941, following an examination of the abilities of all children, they were divided into three groups. About 100 of the ablest boys and girls were left in Bogucice and forced to join the *Hitler-Jugend* or the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (Union of German Girls), while the remainder were transferred to various establishments. Those put in the institutions in Czarnowąsy near Opole and in Wrocław were deported to Bavaria in 1945, within the framework of general evacuation of all children's establishments from Lower Silesia.

The Germans also evacuated establishments located in Great Po-

land and Pomerania, but in that case not all children were deported. For example, those evacuated from Bydgoszcz in January 1945 included seven children aged four to 11 from the municipal children's home, 15 infants from the municipal nursery and five children from the children's hospital and the orphanage.

The children from the Górczyn institution in Poznań, just like the children from other Great Poland establishments, were evacuated to Fürstenwalde in Germany. Some of them were left with German families, while the others were transferred after some time to the Helmstedt district in Brunswick and also turned over to German foster families.

Foster families in Silesia and Pomerania were under the strict control of the German administration and party authorities. The German youth offices kept registers of all children living in foster families and remained in close contact with NSV centres, courts and the Race and Settlement Head Office.

The private life of the family, relations at home, the language the family used — all this was the object of constant observation. If it was found out that the environment in which a child was living did not guarantee its upbringing in the German spirit, the child would be entrusted to a family with decidedly Nazi views or put in a German welfare institution.

Below are excerpts from a report of the police authorities to the Youth Office (*Jugendamt*) in Piotrowice near Katowice.

It was found out in this district that in 1940 a cobbler, Edward Cinalski, resident of Piotrowice, 7 Hrabiego Redena street, had taken charge of a child named Urszula Muthwill, born in Katowice on February 12, 1940...

The foster parents did not sign the German national list and are regarded as Poles. Edward C. does not know the German language. His wife speaks broken German. It is expedient that the child be entrusted to a German foster family. The Youth Office has had no news about it as yet[14].

As regards the General Government, the Nazis evacuated to Germany Polish children from the Evangelical Church home on Karolkowa street in Warsaw. There were about 42 children in the establishment, ranging in age from four to 16 years. After the home had been taken over by the German administration in 1940, the children were forbidden to speak Polish even in conversations with their mothers. "Racial" tests were conducted to determine which children could be regarded as German; in any case, the Nazis tried to convince all children that they were German.

In the autumn of 1942, without notifying the families, all children except two boys were moved to Piaseczno and put in an establishment for juveniles (*Jugendheimstadt*) at 23 Mickiewicza street. Anna Setzer,

who demanded the return of her three children aged from seven to 11, was told that she would get them back after she had signed the *Volksliste*.

In July 1944, the establishment was moved to Carlsbad, from where the children were sent to various localities. Some of them were detached on the way and left in Katowice. Barbara Setzer, born in 1932, was entrusted to the Fischer family in Zittau, Saxony. and her sister, Teresa, born in 1935, to a German family living in another locality.

3. CHILDREN IN ONE-PARENT FAMILIES, BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK OR IN THE CARE OF POLISH FOSTER PARENTS

In what was known as territories incorporated in the Reich, the youth offices (*Jugendamte*) and NSDAP welfare authorities kept registers of all children in the care of Polish foster parents.

The NSV personnel frequently visited these children and attempted to find out whether by any chance they were exposed to Polish influences. The superior authorities instructed their local branches to make inquiries about the foster parents, their behaviour and political views. The inquiries were to furnish answers to the following questions:

— whether the foster parent is politically unimpeachable;

— whether he or she is fitted to perform the honourable function of a foster parent;

— whether he or she is capable of properly representing the interests of his or her charge;

— whether he or she is of German descent.

The results of inquiries were transmitted to the superior authorities, which made the decisions. The local units were bound to propose another foster parent if the present one did not meet the requirements.

Below is an excerpt from a report of the NSV in Świętochłowice, dated January 13, 1941, to the NSDAP Social Welfare Office (*Amt für Volkswohlfahrt*) in Katowice:

The child is looked after by Marta S.'s cousin. The foster father, appointed by the former Polish court, takes little interest in the child. It would be desirable in the interest of the child... to recall the present foster father and appoint a new one. We propose Wilhelm P., a resident of Świętochłowice. Opinion: good. Nationality: German [15].

A shocking note, dated July 23, 1942, was found in the NSV files in Katowice. It concerns Polish foster parents whose child was taken away and put in a German institution:

It has been reported from the district office (*Gauamtsleitung*) over the telephone that Mr. and Mrs. K. and particularly Mrs. K., constantly attempt to get in touch

with a child who once was in their care. They frequently visit him in the institution, and when the manager refuses permission they try to entice him through other boys. They bring him food, as though he did not receive anything in the institution. It has been found out that after each visit Zygmunt was negatively disposed. About two weeks ago, after a brief tête-à-tête with Mrs. K., he turned out to be reserved and stubborn. During a conversation at the district office, he admitted that his former foster parents exert a strange influence on him and that he does not know how to behave. Mrs. K. does not comply with the demands not to visit the institution. I therefore summoned Mrs. K. on July 25 and emphatically pointed out to her that she must stop visiting Zygmunt once and for all and never try to get in touch with him. She was greatly indignant and behaved as though the charges were completely ungrounded.

She made the impression of being a better class woman. As I strongly insisted, she eventually promised, though greatly offended, to do what she was asked. Zygmunt is an intelligent and pleasant boy, and it would be a pity if his further development were constantly interfered with [16].

At the request of the local party unit *(NSDAP Ortsgruppe)* of October 20, 1941, a German was appointed foster father of the above-mentioned child.

The Łódź Youth Office, in a letter no. 460-1/GWR.M.62/43 of November 6, 1943, addressed to the Łódź County Court *(Amstgericht)*, requested the appointment of a German foster parent for the four children of a widow, Janina M., motivating its request in the following way:

The child's mother is of Polish descent, she speaks very little German. her everyday language is Polish ... I deem it necessary to appoint for Mrs. M and her four children an educational assistant (*Erziehungsbeistand*) who will see to it, above all, that the children are brought up in the German spirit [17].

Eventually, Janina M.'s children were taken away from her on the strength of a court decision and deported to Germany. More frequently, however, the Germans neither sought a special opportunity nor resorted to court proceedings. On the basis of Ulrich Greifelt's decree no. 67/I, and even prior to its issue, the youth offices *(Jugendamte)* and the NSV concerned themselves with illegitimate children and children with only one parent. Following the "racial" selection of children on file, the German police took them away, by force or subterfuge, and transferred them to the Germanization centres.

The records of an investigation conducted by the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland into to case of Arthur Greiser show that such a planned campaign was carried out in Rogoźno in 1943 and 1944. In the summer of 1943, the Rogoźno municipal authorities summoned widows and unmarried mothers to turn up, together with their children, at the county office in Oborniki. Following "racial" examinations, the mothers and children were sent back to

Rogoźno. After some time, on various dates, Guard *(Schutzpolizei)* officers, accompanied by German nurses, turned up in the homes of these families to take the children away. Some mothers managed to hide their children. The children were taken to Kalisz, from where, following a period of preliminary Germanization and observation, they were sent to a *Lebensborn* establishment, "Alpenland" in Austria. At least 12 children were abducted from Rogoźno in two groups.

Children were also deported from Oborniki, Swarzędz and Ryczowół. In Łódź, this campaign was conducted by the *Jugendamt*, lasted throughout the occupation and was closely connected with the Germanization of Polish children from welfare establishments.

The general course of action is well illustrated by a deposition of Irena Nowak of Rogoźno:

> In August 1943, I was summoned to turn up, together with my children, at the German district office in Oborniki. I went there with my sons, six-year-old Konrad and four-year-old Wacław. I was received by an official wearing a black uniform (SS-man). I gave personal details about my children. Another official, in plain clothes, recorded the results of the inquiries by the SS-man. When they were through, they let us go home. About a month later, early in the morning, a policeman from the local station came to our home and asked my mother, who had opened the door, where the children, Konrad and Wacław, were. My mother told him that they had left. I told him the same when he had entered the room and asked for an explanation. I refused to give him any information, although I was taken to the police station and threatened with beating and imprisonment. I acted in this way because about two weeks earlier several children from Rogoźno had been deported to an unknown destination. These children were also present during the above-mentioned inquiry. When I returned from the police station, I sent my elder son to Poznań and hid the yonger one at home, in the closet. The German police came to my home many times thereafter, searching for Konrad and Wacław.
>
> I was the only mother in Rogoźno who managed to save her children from deportation. The other children were abducted, and the fate of some of them is unknown to this day [18].

4. CHILDREN TAKEN AWAY FROM PARENTS WHO REFUSED TO SIGN THE **VOLKSLISTE** OR WERE "POLITICALLY SUSPECT"

The Germanization policy consisted also in an attempt to Germanize whole families providing they met definite "racial criteria". In case of doubt, the fact of having children often played a decisive role. The Germans made use, among other things, of the decree of the Reich Minister of Interior, Dr. Wilhelm Frick, of March 13, 1941, concerning German citizenship for Polish and Gdańsk citizens. This decided that if one of the spouses refused to sign the German national list, the other spouse and the children would be entered on the list.

Henrich Himmler's decree of February 16, 1942, on the treatment of persons included in group 4 of the German national list pointed to the negative effect which "politically unreliable" parents might have upon the process of Germanization of their children. The lack of concern on the part of such parents for the German education of children made Himmler doubt whether they would fulfil their "patriotic duty". In case parental influence could not be eliminated by way of coercion, Himmler ordered children to be taken away and entrusted to German foster families, reliable as regards their world outlook and political views.

The investigation conducted by the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland into the case of Albert Forster revealed that Himmler's decree had been ruthlessly enacted in Pomerania. The enactment even exceeded the framework of the decree inasmuch as it was also applied to families included in group 3 of the German national list. Heinrich Himmler's decree of February 16, 1942, sanctioned the existing state of affairs; for it was established in the course of the investigation that a similar Germanization campaign had already been carried out in Pomerania in 1940.

This is how Stanisław Rozpierski presented the history of his child:

In 1940 the NSV in Grudziądz took my daughter Irena, aged 10, away from me. At that time, I was living with my wife Elżbieta in Gołębiów and working as a farmhand for a German. My wife, though a member of the Evangelical Church, felt herself to be Polish and we were bringing up our daughter in the Polish language and spirit. That is why the NSV took my daughter. She was sent to live with a German, Szubert, in Parki, Grudziądz county. After two years, she escaped and returned home, but the gendarmerie took her back to Szubert, having first beaten her and her mother. After some time, the Szubert family moved to Germany and probably took my daughter with them. A few days ago, I received a letter from Anna Szubert from Germany, who wrote to me that my daughter is regarded as German because she does not have any documents [19].

Agnieszka Klimczak thus described the loss of her two children:

In 1942 or 1943 the NSV in Grudziądz took away my two children: Jakub Klimczak, aged five, and Teresa Klimczak, aged four. At that time, I was living in Pokrzywno near Grudziądz and working as a farmhand, because my husband had just been drafted into the German army. I and my husband Jakub had been classified in group 3 of the German national list. As I talked to and brought up the children in the Polish spirit and language, the children were taken away from me and sent to live with a German family in Grudziądz. Accidentally, I met my daughter with a German woman and took Teresa back home. After three months, however, I was brought to trial on this account, and the Grudziądz court sentenced me to one year in a camp. As I was imprisoned immediately after the trial, in my absence my daughter was again taken away and sent to live with Germans, in Wejherowo or its vicinity as far as I know. Since that time, I have had no news about my children [20].

The refusal to sign the German national list, which exposed the parents to most severe repressions, did not protect their children against Germanization. The decree, dated September 12, 1940, of Heinrich Himmler, as the *Reichsführer SS* and the Reich Commissioner for the Strenghtening of German Folkdom, concerning the examination and selection of the population from the so-called incorporated eastern territories (*Erlass für die Überprüfung und Aussonderung der Bevölkerung in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten*, Berlin, 13. 9. 1940 Nr 1/K/0 36/28.III. 40) enjoined the use of preventive measures with regard to persons refusing their consent to "re-Germanization", while the upbringing of their children, "who cannot be held responsible for the behaviour of their parents", was to be entrusted to the proper German institutions.[21]

Himmler's decree of February 16, 1942 extended the above mentioned directives and enjoined that children be separated from "politically suspect" parents.[22] In such cases, information against parents to the Gestapo was sufficient to cause their imprisonment in a concentration camp.

The above decree was enacted strictly and ruthlessly. Following the arrest of the parents, the NSV, in cooperation with the Gestapo, took charge of the children, or the mother and children, and deported them to Germany to subject them to the process of Germanization.

A typical example of such a population policy is provided by the history of the Zajdel family from Łódź, as reflected in the documents presented below:

Litzmannstadt, Sept. 18, 1944

1. *Volkspflegeamt*
—4008 —

On August 15, 1944, a telephone message was received from the Youth Office (the name of the branch is unknown), that the Seidel children, living at 3 Töpfergasse in Litzmannstadt, whose parents had reportedly been arrested, should be put in a children's centre. The Youth Office had received notification to this effect from the criminal police. The Youth Office requested us to contact the criminal police (the telephone number was given) and agree on a time on the following day. August 16, at which a socjal worker would come to the Seildels' home and take away the children with the aid of the criminal police.

Signed: Biebe

To social workers Ramme and Foerster E. for information and further proceedings.

On August 16, 1944, assisted by social worker Ramme, I collected the two Seidel children from the home of their grandmother, who lives in the same building at 3 Töpfergasse. The grandmother did not know the dates of birth of the children. Also, I could not learn anything about their parents.

Neighbours told me that the Seidels and their 14-year-old son had been arrested, because despite their German names they had refused to sign the national list.

The Seidels apartment was sealed, and, therefore, we were unable to present to the Youth Office food coupons and other evidence.

In my opinion, the children could have stayed with their grandmother, but the Gestapo officer who was present there said that it was necessary to secure the German education of the children.

We put older boy at 16 Gosslerstrasse and the younger one at 12 Zebtenweg. We could not establish any dates at the registration office, because we did not know the first name of Mr. Seidel, and Seidel is a very frequent name.

Signed: E. Foerster
Chief Social Worker
Northern District [23]

Although the decree of the Minister of Interior on the German national list of March 13, 1941, was not binding in the territory of the General Government, it was officially delivered to Governor General Hans Frank. Some provisions of the decree and of the afore-cited decree of Heinrich Himmler were applied there by analogy to so-called persons of German descent.

The practical application of these provisions is exemplified by the foregoing decision of the *Kreishauptmann* of Dębica, Rzeszów voivodship, in the case of Józef Schwakopf, a resident of Orłowo (German: Schönanger):

Debke, June 26, 1942

Generalgouvernement
Der Kreishauptmann des Kreises Debica

Amt für Innere Verwaltung
Abt: I B u. F 115
Dr Schm/R
To Mr. Józef Schwakopf
Schönanger no. 6

Re: expulsion

Because of your German descent, you were given three months to join the German national community; as you have failed to comply, I thereby expel you and your wife from Schönanger.

You have the right to take all your property with you. I designate, as your new place of residence, the commune of Pilzno-village. You should report to the head of the commune of Pilzno-village as regards your abode. I fix the time for your departure from Schönanger for the period starting on June 27, 1942, and ending at 10 a.m. on July 4, 1942. Unless you move out by that time, you will be removed by the gendarmerie and your property will be confiscated.

At the same time, I prohibit you to ever return to the village of Schönanger after July 4, 1942. If any of you is sighted in Schönanger, you will be put in a concentration camp.

I take your minor children to be brought up in social welfare institutions.

(round seal: *Generalgouvernement*
Der Kreishauptmann in Debica [24]

Many German foster families took with them to Germany the Polish children entrusted to their care after they had been taken away by force from their parents. For example, the register of the Bydgoszcz municipal authorities lists 25 names of children taken from there to Germany in January 1945. These facts, as well as the frequent cases in which German families residing in the Reich took Polish children from the *Lebensborn*, although aware that these children had parents or relatives in Poland, justify the claim that responsibility for the crime of abduction and Germanization of Polish children rested not only with the officials of the Nazi authorities and institutions mentioned in this book, but also with numerous members of the German public. The concealment and retention in Germany of abducted children, established on many occasions in the course of the search for these children, extends this responsibility to numerous organizations, institutions, associations and private persons.

Nazi rule in Poland was marked by an uninterrupted campaign of murder, arrests and deportations. Although these crimes were the effect of the extermination policy, many of them were closely connected with the Germanization of children. For the breaking up of a Polish family offered a convenient opportunity to take charge of the children. Thanks to the coordination of the activities of the police, the Gestapo, resettlement offices and labour offices with the entire Germanization machinery, such opportunities were taken advantage of promptly and ruthlessly.

The depositions quoted below illustrate the cruelty of the Germanization campaign. Józef Olszacki, born in 1895 and a resident of Łódź, testified:

> In 1944, following my arrest and deportation to a concentration camp, my daughters Regina, aged 14, and Anna Maria, aged 10, were summoned to the *Arbeitsamt* and later to the Race Office. I did not see my daughters after I had returned from the camp; they were no longer there. What I know about them comes only from my foster daughter who had brought them up. During an examination at the Race Office, both daughters were pronounced 'racially valuable', This is confirmed by the files of the Social Welfare Department, where there are notes on documents to the effect that my daughters were fit for Germanization... On January 18, 1944, they were transferred to Kalisz (Gaukinderheim, Posenstr. 1). While in the camp, I did not have any letters from my daughters. They wrote to my landlady; the last news was dated January 9, 1945. I know from a nun who was present during the evacuation of children from Kalisz on January 18, 1945, that the children boarded a train and headed toward Poznań. But their destination is unknown [25].

Maria Kosmyk, born on August 8, 1908, and a resident of Łódź, testified:

I had two children: a boy aged six, born on July 23, 1933, and a girl born on February 28, 1939. In 1940 I was arrested by the German gendarmerie because a German naighbour had informed against me. With two small children, I could not agree to do the washing for her. At that time. I was living at 1 Skorupki street in Rawa Mazowiecka. I was taken with my children to Łódź. One of the gendarmes took the children away from me, while the other one led me to the *Arbeitsamt*. When I was being led from the *Arbeitsamt* on Kopernika street to the Lager, my son, Roman, saw me from the garden where the children were kept. Soon afterwards, I was deported to Lübeck for forced labour... I stayed there until 1942. After my return... I could not obtain any information at the office on Kopernika street. Till this day I do not know what happened to my children [26].

Cecylia Krzysztofiak, born in Łódź on November 16, 1904, testified:

During the occupation, I worked for the Bidermann firm, and I was transferred, under constraint, to a factory in Germany, not far from Berlin. I left my child with a sister of mine. My sister tried to have me released on the grounds that I had a child. The Social Welfare Department ordered the child to be put in the shelter on Karolewska street. The boy was six years old at that time. In 1943 he was taken from Karolewska street to Kopernika street and later deported to Kalisz. I learnt from the Polish personnel on Kopernika street that the child had been sent to Germany as 'racially valuable'. Throughout 1943 I was sending money to the Social Welfare Department in Łódź to cover the upkeep of my son; later I learnt that he had been deported from Łódź as early as April 1943. Till this day I have had no news about my only child [27].

Another group of children were orphans whose parents had been executed as hostages or members of the resistance movement. The *Lebensborn* also took charge, for Germanization purposes, of "racially valuable" children of partisans; the transport of those children to Germany was the concern of the VoMi.

5. CHILDREN BORN IN GERMANY

From the very outset of the war, women from the occupied countries, and above all from the occupied territories of Eastern Europe, started to be brought to Germany for forced labour or to concentration camps.

Women deported for forced labour were confined to labour camps or worked in households, on farms, in trading establishments or industrial plants. The fact that a deported woman was pregnant was, naturally, of no consequence.

The attitude of the Nazi authorities towards these women and their children born in Germany passed through three phases.

In the first one, extending until March 1943, the authorities of the Third Reich did not take any special steps with regard to pregnant women. As penal law prohibited abortions in working women, they were

sent, if possible, to their home countries for the period of delivery. The rapidly growing demand for labour made the authorities realize that this caused a temporary decrease in the work force. It was therefore decided to evolve a formula which would justify the necessity of abortions in women working as forced labourers. The views in German medical circles on this question were clearly divided, since in fact it was difficult to by-pass the various extremely stringent provisions of the penal code and the legislative intentions underlying these provisions. The Nazi thesis, however, that anything which served the interests of the German nation was the law, gained the upper hand.

The decree of the *Reichsführer* for health (*Reichsgesundheitsführer*) of March 11, 1943, initiated the second phase. The decree ordered that abortions were to be performed at the request of a pregnant Eastern women worker *(Ostarbeiterin)*.[28] The requests, however, were made in the following way: an appropriate form was sent to a pregnant woman, and it was generally known that refusal to sign it might result in confinement to a concentration camp. The abortion procedures with respect to foreign women workers were regulated by a secret decree of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom of June 9, 1943, which contained, among others, the following provisions:

(1) abortion was to be dependent on the permission of a plenipotentiary of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom;

(3) permission for an abortion was assumed to have been granted when the father was not of German origin;

(3) permission of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom was required in all cases where it was established or probable that the father was of German extraction;

(4) after reporting to the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom cases where the father was of German extraction, the Race and Settlement Office would carry out a racial examination of the mother and the father;

(5) if it was probable that the child to be born might be racially valuable, permission to perform an abortion would be refused.[29]

Referring to the above directives, the head of the SS Race and Settlement Head Office ordered, in a secret decree of August 23, 1943, that all cases in which permission to perform an abortion was denied should be reported, so that the question of the Germanization of the mother or the child could be considered *(Einbeziehung in das Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren)*.[30]

As war losses increased, the authorities of the Third Reich, in an attempt to maintain the population equilibrium, initiated the third phase by the decree of the *Reichsführer SS* and chief of the German

police of July 27, 1943, concerning the treatment of pregnant foreign women workers and the children they gave birth to (*Behandlung schwangerer ausländischer Arbeiterinnen und der im Reich von Ausländischen Arbeiterinnen geborenen Kinder*).

The decree emphasized that children born of foreign women workers should be preserved for the German nation and brought up as German children.

In contrast to previous decrees, the new one assumed that desirable fathers might come from nationalities similar in terms of race (*artsverwandten Blutes*), deciding, in particular, that:

— racially worthless children should be directed to welfare establishments for foreign children (*Ausländerkinderpflegestätten*);

— work establishments should report to the youth offices (*Jugendamte*), through labour offices (*Arbeitsamte*) the data on all pregnant women;

— the youth offices should conduct an investigation concerning paternity and report the results obtained by SS and police officers in order to carry out examinations through the intermediary of the Race and Settlement Office;

— in case the parents were qualified as racially valuable, their children should be taken care of by the NSV, which should put them in institutions for racially valuable children (*Kinderheime für gutrassige Kinder*) or in foster families;

— especially racially valuable pregnant mothers should be confined to the care of the *Lebensborn;*

— mothers must not be told of the purposes of this decree;

— mothers of racially valuable children who wished to return to their homeland with these children should be kept in the Reich;

— mothers unable to work and their racially worthless children should be eliminated (*abgeschoben*).[31]

The latter provision should be interpreted as a directive to exterminate mothers and children, in accordance with the Nazi policy of annihilation of all those unable to work and "racially worthless". The decree of July 27, 1943, embraced, in principle, all foreign women workers, but it contained special provisions concerning Eastern women workers, women working in the General Government and the so-called charges of the Third Reich (*Schutzangehörige*). These women were treated more brutally and ruthlessly. They were not required to give even a pretence of their consent for the transfer of their children to the care of the NSV or the *Lebensborn;* moreover, the children of mothers returning to their homeland were forced to stay in the Reich. The perfidious directive that future mothers should be cared for in the last months of pregnancy, so as to inspire confidence in them, along with the above-mentioned provision which prohibited informing

mothers of the purposes of the decree, show up distinctly the system and methods of Germanization policy with respect to this group of children.

The above-mentioned decree of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom furnished grounds for other authorities and institutions to issue supplementary orders. According to a secret decree of the head of the SS Race and Settlement Head Office (*Chef des Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamtes SS*) of August 23, 1943:

— decisions concerning the treatment of pregnant women and their children were to be made by the head of the Race and Settlement Head Office;

— the competence of the Reich Minister of Interior in these matters stemmed from tactical reasons and was purely formal, since the final decision was reserved for the Race and Settlement Head Office;

— all cases of positive results of racial examinations were to be reported by the NSV.[32]

The above directives aimed at "strengthening the German nation with racially valuable blood and eliminating all that is racially worthless". They were clearly a reflection of the principles professed by Hitler and Himmler.

In conformity with the directives of the NSDAP social welfare authorities, circulars of the NSDAP Social Welfare Head Office (NSDAP, *Hauptamt für Volkswohlfahrt)* of October 9, 1943, no. 186/43 and of January 20, 1944, no. 10/44, concerning the treatment of pregnant foreign women workers and children born of these workers in the Reich *(Behandlung schwangerer ausländischer Arbeiterinnen und der im Reich von ausländischen Arbeiterinnen geborenen Kinder),* the following was decreed:

— the NSV should take charge of all racially valuable children born of deported women workers;

— these children should be put in NSV establishments or adoptive families;

— all children falling in this category, and remaining under the NSV care, should be examined in accordance with the principles laid down by the decree of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom of July 27, 1943;

— racially worthless children should be turned over to welfare establishments for children of foreign women workers (*Ausländerkinderpflegestätten);*

— the costs of care for racially valuable children should be covered by NSV units.[33]

The NSDAP circular of January 20, 1944, however, contains a characteristic difference in comparison with previous directives, since it

Concentration Camps

When the panic-striken SS personnel was about to leave Auschwitz, they hurriedly murdered the witnesses to their crimes. Among the victims there were pregnant women

A magazine storing the footwear of murdered prisoners. The Nazis did not succeed in evacuating it

The surviving children brought out of the camp in January, 1945

Homeless children without families were placed in children's homes. Some of them are still seeking their next of kin

Showing their liberators the camp numbers tattooed on their forearms

A two-year old child who survived the evacuation of the camp in January, 1945

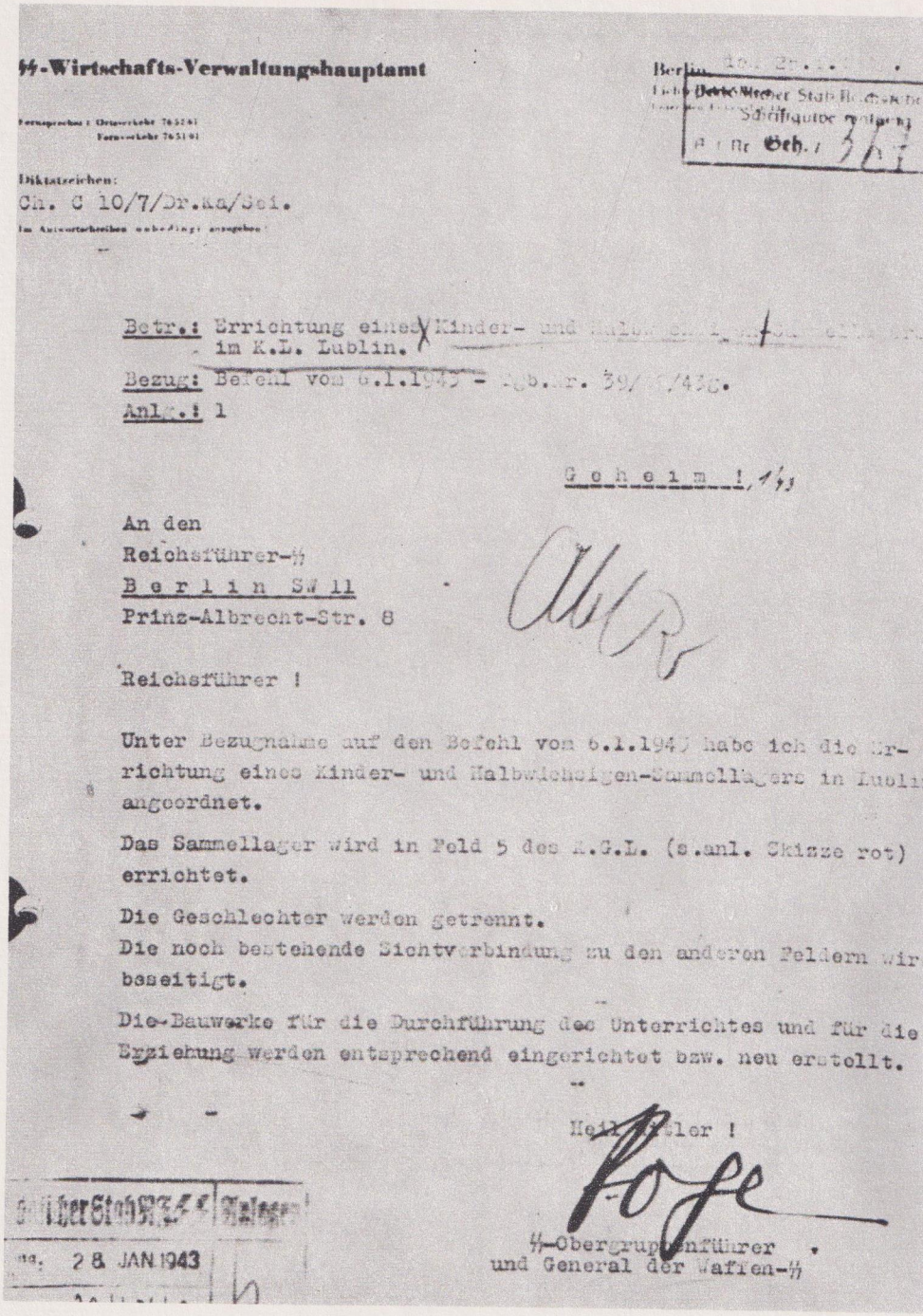
A four-year-old boy diagnosed by doctors after the liberation as suffering from whooping-cough and elementary 3rd-degree distrophy

A four-year-old boy with symptoms of elementary 3rd-degree distrophy and avitaminosis, with a bleeding swelling on the abdomen

A boy, aged 14, with symptoms of elementary, 2nd degree distrophy

Both girls had to stand without shoes in heavy frost for 12 hours. After the liberation doctors diagnosed 2nd and 3rd degree frostbite

Twins who were subjected to the criminal pseudo-medical experiments of the camp physician and war criminal Josef Mengele



SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt

Berlin, den 2[illegible]

Fernsprecher: Ortsverkehr 76 52 61
Fernverkehr 76 51 91

Diktatzeichen:
Ch. C 10/7/Dr.Ka/Sei.

Im Antwortschreiben unbedingt anzugeben:

Betr.: Errichtung eines Kinder- und Halbwüchsigen-Sammellagers im K.L. Lublin.

Bezug: Befehl vom 6.1.1943 - Tgb.Nr. 39/[illegible]/43g.

Anlg.: 1

Geheim !

An den
Reichsführer-SS
Berlin SW 11
Prinz-Albrecht-Str. 8

Reichsführer !

Unter Bezugnahme auf den Befehl vom 6.1.1943 habe ich die Errichtung eines Kinder- und Halbwüchsigen-Sammellagers in Lublin angeordnet.

Das Sammellager wird in Feld 5 des K.G.L. (s.anl. Skizze rot) errichtet.

Die Geschlechter werden getrennt.
Die noch bestehende Sichtverbindung zu den anderen Feldern wird beseitigt.

Die Bauwerke für die Durchführung des Unterrichtes und für die Erziehung werden entsprechend eingerichtet bzw. neu erstellt.

Heil Hitler !

Pohl

SS-Obergruppenführer
und General der Waffen-SS

Geheimer Stab Reichsführer
Schriftgutverwaltung
Geh. / 367

Geheimer Stab RFSS
Anlagen
28 JAN 1943

A campaign is being conducted in the Federal Republic of Germany with a view to clearing the *Waffen SS* of the charge of complicity in the crime of genocide. The photograph shows the original of a *Waffen SS* document which makes a mention of children in an extermination camp

distinguished Polish women from other foreign women workers. It provided that the permission of the SS authorities to perform an abortion was required in each case where a Polish woman was concerned and this irrespective of the extraction of their father.

The role, tasks and mode of procedure of the youth offices (*Jugendamte*), health offices (*Gesundheitsamte*) and social welfare unions (*Fürsorgeverbände)* during this campaign were defined in detail by a decree of the Reich Minister of Interior of June 5, 1944.

Youth offices were designated legal guardians of children born of deported mothers. In terms of the right to social welfare such children were put on an equal footing with German children (*Rechtsjugendwohlfahrtgesetz*). The cost of care of these children was to be covered, in keeping with para. 38 of the law on youth welfare, by the National Social Welfare Union *(Landes-Fürsorgeverband).*

None of the above-cited decrees indicated whether the procedures concerning pregnant women workers applied only to single women. There must have existed some doubts, however, since the Race and Settlement Head Office, in a secret decree of December 19, 1944, concerning abortions in married Eastern women and Polish women *(Schwangerschaftsunterbrechung bei verheirateten Ostarbeiterinnen und Polinen),* ordered the treatment of married women on an equal footing with single women.

This distinction is not essential, however, since many Poles who, because of the legal restrictions, had been compelled to marry secretly, were regarded by Germans as single. It follows from numerous documents, reports, testimony by witnesses and court proceedings, that the above-mentioned orders of the Nazi authorities were actually carried into practice. Some documents found in Würzburg indicate that the plenipotentiary of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom in Nuremberg instructed the NSDAP Social Welfare Office in Würzburg to take charge of children about to be born of Polish parents.

Such an instruction usually followed the pattern presented below:

> Re: treatment of children born of foreign women workers in the Reich.
>
> Polish woman NN, born on..., address..., is expecting a baby (...month of pregnancy), whose father is Pole NN, address... The mother's request for an abortion was rejected, since there is a likelihood of racially good offspring. The NSV is kindly asked to take charge of the baby following its birth [34].

The first of the instructions found is dated February 3, 1944 and the last one June 27, 1944. Thus the campaign possessed a systematic and planned character; already in the mother's womb, children were assigned for Germanization.

It should be emphasized that the Germanization process embraced not only children born in Germany, but also those who had arrived there with their parents deported for forced labour. They were separated from the parents under the pretext of sending them to school, hospital, etc., and any attempt on the part of the parents to regain their children was doomed to failure.

6. OTHER METHODS OF "TAKING CHARGE" OF POLISH CHILDREN

Tens of thousands of Polish children and young people were deported for forced labour to Germany during the Nazi occupation. They were sent to the Reich by resettlement centres in Poznań and Łódź, labour offices and social welfare institutions. There is also abundant evidence of "recruitment" carried out at private homes and in the streets. All this created particularly convenient opportunities for selection and deportation to Germany of Polish girls under age, who helped to swell the labour force, and, at the same time, were subjected to an intensive Germanization process. Although Himmler's orders concerning this campaign fixed the age of girls at 16 to 20 years, actually the Germans deported girls over 14 and even younger ones.

It appears from a report to Himmler of the Main Staff Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom of February 20, 1942, that the selection of girls to be subjected to Germanization was entrusted to the branch of the Race and Settlement Head Office (RuSHA) in Łódź. The selection embraced, first of all, girls from the *Warthegau*. The labour offices and social welfare offices were obliged to direct girls to the RuSHA branch.

A report of the Main Staff Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Strenghtening of German Folkdom of December 22, 1942, indicates that on November 30 of that year the number of Polish girls over 14 years of age and considered to "lend themselves to Germanization" working as domestic servants in Germany, totalled 6,818, including 1,127 in urban households and 5,691 on farmsteads.

The tragedy of these children was thus depicted in the above-mentioned report of February 20, 1942;

> The experience gained in the course of employment of young individuals fit for re-Germanization, whose families had stayed in the East, is on the whole, unfavourable. Exchange of correspondence with the families cannot be controlled. Moreover, homesickness plays a great part. Many of the domestic servants showed resistance and had to be punished. There were numerous cases of suicide. I was therefore compelled to recommend to the branch of the SS Race and Settlement Office extreme caution in selecting such girls [35].

Aparat from systematic, planned abduction and Germanization, many children were taken to Germany, who had been arrested by the Nazi authorities in the course of various SS and police operations or as a result of wartime tragedies of various sorts. Furthermore, the extremely difficult political and economic situation during the occupation created conditions in which children had to work, engage in unlicenced trade, etc. As they spent most of their time away from home, they were exposed to round-ups and arrests. Some of those children were sent to reformatories and labour camps, others were taken to Germany. In view of the circumstances in which these children were detained, it can hardly be said that in each case Germanization was the purpose of deportation. No evidence is available, for example, that the boys separated from their mothers in the first days of the Warsaw Uprising at the Gestapo headquarters on Szucha avenue and subsequently deported to Germany via the Auschwitz concentration camp, had been subjected to "racial selection". If we raise here the question of these children, it is only because, irrespective of the purpose of deportation, they were later subjected to the Germanization process or otherwise were Germanized as a result of their compulsory stay in the Reich.

Below is an extract from the testimony by Władysław Ostrowski, who upon detention was nine years old and lived in Suchowola near Lvov:

> I was taken by some SS-men straight from the field, where I was herding cattle. I was taken to Hartmansdorff, there was a school there, I learnt German, and they beat me when I spoke Polish. I stayed there until the Americans came. When they brought me to Łódź, I spoke very little Polish [36].

The final military defeat of the Third Reich prevented the implementation in the General Government of Heinrich Himmler's plan aimed at carrying out a systematic valuing selection of all Polish children over six years of age for Germanization purposes. In spite of the heavy fighting on the front, however, the Germans succeeded in putting through most of Himmler's directives, which postulated "the inclusion of good blood in the German ranks or its destruction",[37] in the course of resettlement, pacification and evacuation operations.

On the basis of German documents and post-war investigation concerning one episode only, namely, the expulsion of the population from the Zamość region, it seems justified to assume that a particularly large number of children was deported in the course of resettlement, pacification and evacuation campaign in this area. These operations, which embraced the Zamość, Biłgoraj, Tomaszów and Hrubieszów districts, were directed by the resettlement centre in Łódź through the

intermediary of its Zamość branch. Among the 110,000 civilians expelled from 297 villages in the period from February 27, 1942, to August 1943, there were some 30,000 children.

According to the orders issued, the selection of children to be subjected to Germanization in the Third Reich was to take place in special "children's education camps" (*Kindererziehungslager*) for children under ten years of age. Such camps were not established, however. Instead, selection took place in resettlement camps in Zamość, Zwierzyniec and Lublin and in the Majdanek concentration camp. The process of Germanization proper commenced when, following "racial examinations" by RuSHA "experts" in the camps, the children were taken to Germany.

It is not known how many of those 30,000 children were eventually deported for Germanization. It is possible, however, to establish, with a large measure of probability, the minimum number. For the extant files of the Lublin branch of the Central Welfare Council (RGO) contain a list of groups of children transferred from the afore-mentioned camps straight to Germany.[38] The list includes 29 transports totalling 4,454 Polish children, ranging in age from two to 14, who were carried by train or trucks deep into the Third Reich and the so-called incorporated territories in the period from July 7, until August 25, 1943. According to information which the RGO received from Silesia and Prussia, the children who had been taken there were sent to live with German families or put in German institutions. The veracity of this information is confirmed by a decree of the Reich Main Security Office of October 10, 1942, which confided the "racially valuable" children of expellees from the Lublin region to the care of the NSV.

It follows from German documentation that children abducted in the course of pacification and evacuation were assembled in transit camps and next taken to Germany. The documentation, which covers the period from January until July 1943, concerns the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Galicia, while similar documentation concerning the Lublin region has not been found. This does not mean, however, that the respective orders were not carried out in the Polish territories in the period when the front moved there, and even earlier, in the course of partisan warfare. This is indirectly confirmed by documents, which mention Lublin and Trawniki, and not localities situated in the Soviet Union, as sites where children's camps were to be established. One should therefore assume that there were also Polish children among those under 10 years of age, assembled in camps by Erich von dem Bach, the commanding officer of the units fighting partisan detachments, and also among the children between ten and 16 years of age, for whom a camp was planned in Lublin.

As regards the deportation of children within the *Heu-Aktion*, although the note of the Reich Ministry concerning the occupied eastern territories refers to Byelorussia, the Ukraine and Galicia, the shifts of the front at that time ensured that the operation also embraced a large number of Polish children. Moreover, young people from the Polish eastern territories were deported to the Reich much earlier, under the pretext that they were of German descent.

7. DEPORTATION OF CHILDREN FROM SCHOOLS

No materials are available that would permit us to ascertain on what basis a large number of Polish children were abducted straight from school and deported to Germany in 1944. In all probability, the action was initiated by an order of the SS and police commander for the General Government as a plenipotentiary of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom. This is indicated by the circumstances attendant on the deportation.

The Nazis deported schoolchildren aged six upwards, probably on the basis of prepared lists. The children were taken, straight from the classrooms, usually without any forewarning, and their parents were rarely notified. They were put in special children's camps where the use of Polish was prohibited. All inmates were taught German, and older children were forced to join Nazi youth organizations.

The above circumstances indicate that the children were deported for the purpose of Germanization. The fact that they were deported on a mass scale, hastily and probably without a more thorough selection seems to prove that in the last phase of the war Himmler's directives calling for no "good blood" to be left on the enemy side played an increasing part.

The brief descriptions, given below, of the fate of the deported children illustrate the vast scope of this campaign and its organized character. The descriptions are based on children's testimony.

Nestor Chadaj, 13 years old at that time, had since 1944 lived with his parents in the village of Dobromil near Przemyśl. In the spring of 1944 he was taken straight from school together with some 20 other children, who were permitted — under escort — to say good-bye to their parents. They were carried by train via Cracow to a camp in Zwickau, where the boys worked every other day and learnt German on the remaining days. They were taught by an SS-man, and speaking Polish was punished by flogging. Some of the Dobromil boys wore armbands with swastikas. Nestor Chadaj met there some children from

the Przemyśl and Jarosław areas, who were living in nearby camps in Hartmansdorff and Kitzberg. The boys and girls did drill on the playground, marched and sang German songs.[39]

Seven-year-old Kacper Poldek lived in Nowy Sącz together with his parents and brothers and sisters. He was taken straight from school, along with his sister and two other schoolboys. They were carried by train to Germany. Kacper was put in the Zwickau camp, where only boys were living. He was told to speak German only; he was beaten, just like other boys, for speaking Polish. There were some other boys from Nowy Sącz in the camp.[40]

Mieczysław Domański lived in Adamów near Busko before the war. When he was six, he was taken from school together with other pupils, a total of about 80. He stayed in several camps: Racibórz, Lichtentane and Grossen. His longest stay was in the Racibórz camp, where there were about 50 boys up to 15 years of age. Speaking Polish was punished by flogging. Towards the end of the war he was taken to the Zwickau camp, where Kacper Poldek was already an inmate. The Nazis had them wear German uniforms and do drill. The girls were treated in the same way.[41]

Jan Hamerling lived with his parents in Radom. When he was six, he was taken from school along with his two sisters and other children. Before departure, the children underwent checkups in school: they were weighed, measured, and their teeth were examined. Next the children were carried by train to Germany. Janek was separated from his sisters and taken to Löbnitz near Zwickau, where the children were taught German songs. For speaking Polish they were beaten with a rubber club or a strap. The camp was freed by US troops.[42]

Aleksander Bezler, a resident of Brzozów near Tomaszów Mazowiecki, was taken from school in Tomaszów together with other children, after they had been examined by doctors and photographed in various positions. He was not allowed to say good-bye to his parents. Still in school, in Tomaszów, the children were dressed in black trousers and yellow shirts. They were taken to a camp in Saxony, in the town of Werdau, he believes. They were taught to march and sing German songs. Speaking Polish was punished by flogging. There were only boys in the camp, but none of them was from Aleksander's village. After the war he was repatriated and took up residence in Łódź.[43]

Deportation of children from schools took place in the period of irreversible military defeats of the Third Reich, when the short-lived empire was falling into ruin. But in spite of this, the action of deportation and Germanization of children was carried on as planned, consistently and systematically.

8. SELECTION AND DESTRUCTION OF THE PERSONALITY

The afore-cited abundant evidence based on German documentation and testimony by witnesses illustrates the means applied by the Third Reich in the campaign to deport and Germanize Polish children.

What decided a child's destiny, especially in cases when German descent could not be presumed, was a special selection procedure, which consisted in so-called racial and medical examinations and thereafter — and sometimes parallel to them — tests of a child's abilities and character.

Although there was not enough time to carry out the selection of all children deported to the Reich, selection was a basic factor of the whole programme and embraced, with some modifications determined by the children's origins, all those entrusted for Germanization to the *Lebensborn*, the German motherland schools and the NSV. It also encompassed girls deported to work as domestic servants and a large proportion of children deported from schools.

Ulrich Greifelt issued only practical directives stemming from the memorial of the NSDAP Racial Political Office of November 1939. The authors of the memorial believed that "true transnationalization" was possible only with "identical racial traits", and that children could not be older than eight to ten years. This age was to be the upper limit of the potentiality for "complete Germanization".

These inflexible — as it would seem — racial political canons were undermined by Ulrich Greifelt's decree of February 19, 1942, which raised the age limit for Polish children sent to the German motherland schools to 12 years.

In practice, even this limit was higher, and in the course of the *Heu-Aktion*, which started in June 1944, it was increased to over 17 years.

In the course of "racial" selection, children were divided into three categories: those constituting a desirable, acceptable and undesirable increase of the population.

Aside from "racial" selection, great weight was attached to psychological traits, among other things, to the child's expression. Thirteen-year-old Wojciech Wysocki from Konin district, whose racial traits were defined to be "N—O" (Eastern Nordic), was described as a good, nice boy with a calm and frank look.

The report said that "Wojciech is very promising", although he was under the influence of his mother, who declined to emigrate to Germany.

Things were different as regards 12-year-old Luiza Stempin from Wieluń county of whom it was reported that she "cannot look one in the face"; hence the conclusion of the person in charge of the girls' section that "a heavy hand is needed to bring her up to be a German

woman".[44] Thus the unhappiness of a child taken away from its family was regarded as a negative character trait.

As far as ten-year old Zbigniew Olszanowski was concerned, the camp authorities could say very little because he turned out to be "reserved" and knew almost no German. However, he made a decent, "clean" impression, it was admitted, and seemed "very calm".[45]

The report on 12-year-old Agnieszka Miszewska was that she was very young and "very promising", as she possessed very good character traits and mental abilities. She made a very good general impression.[46]

In many cases, despite the positive results of "racial" and medical examinations "negative" character traits determined the child's rejection as unfit for Germanization.

Character observation continued after a child had been deported to Germany and put in a foster family.

Thus the whole special selection was intended not to determine a child's German extraction, but to sort out such Polish children who, according to pseudo-scientific racial, eugenic and educational criteria, showed valuable psychosomatic characteristics.

Heinrich Himmler on many occasions interfered with the activity of experts in racial affairs. In a secret letter of February 16, 1943, he ordered that teachers and colleagues clearly explain to the "racially valuable" sons of Maria Łambucka, aged eight and 13, that they were by no means traitors to Poland, but taking into account their German extraction and racially valuable traits, should "acknowledge the blood whence they come". As regards other children, Himmler ordered recommendations to be presented to him, along with a photograph, racial appraisal and the impression that each child or mother made.

The destruction of the children's personality started immediately in the transit camp, welfare institution, or "motherland school", where the use of the Polish language was prohibited. Breaches of the prohibition were punished by flogging, striking in the face, deprivation of food, or exhausting military drill.

The next stage was the introduction of the Nazi system of education, founded on the ideology of racialism, militarism and the cult of leadership. Uniforms, swastikas, Nazi songs, drums, drills and marches — all this was designed to reshape the children's psyche and bring about "true transnationalization". Especially great weight was attached to marching drill which was to exert a strong influence on the children's psyche. For marching, as Hermann Rauschning rightly put it, "kills thought and destroys individuality". Alfred Rosenberg, the leading ideologist of Nazism, stressed that the style of the marching column, wherever and to whatever end this column might be used, was the

very life style of the German nation, a style basically different from that referred to as British liberalism.[47]

The next phase of the process of destruction of personality and creation of a new one was removing any evidence of the children's Polish extraction. To this end, first names, surnames and other personal details were changed, a separate register kept and false papers and certificates issued.

The principles governing the change of names were laid down in an order of the head of the Race and Settlement Head Office of September 17, 1942, concerning the Germanization of names. It was ruled that new names should be adapted, if possible, to the etymology and pronunciation of the previous names. When this was impossible, common German names, sounding typically Nordic, should be given. The children were to be transferred to "motherland schools" and the *Lebensborn* under their new names.

In changing a name, a certain number of the initial letters of the previous name were usually preserved, for example, Sosnowska became Sosemann, Piwowarczyk Pichler, Mikołajczyk Micker, Witaszek Wittke. The aim of this was to let the two names merge in the memory of a child so that it would forget the former one. Apart from popular German names, children were given names phonetically corresponding to their Polish names, for example, Piątek was turned into Pionteck, Jesionek into Jeschonnek. Sometimes the new name was a translation of the Polish name, for example, Ogrodowczyk was Gärtner and Młynarczyk Müller.

Issuing false birth certificates was the concern of the *Lebensborn*. Roman Roszatomski's false certificate, in the name of Hermann Lüdeking, contains, apart from a fictitious date of birth (Jan. 20, 1938), no data on his parents and designates as his birth place the locality of Bruczków (Bruckau), where one of the Germanization establishments for children was located. Roman was in fact born in Łódź.

With a view to removing all evidence, a separate registration office was set up for the Germanization centre in Kalisz, on the basis of a secret order of the Reich Minister of Interior, Frick, dated December 10, 1942.[48] The Minister justified the need for establishing such an office by the fear lest Polish relatives and acquaintances might simply inquire for them at the local police registration office. Thus, "the intended goal of Germanizing the child might be endangered", the order warned.

In the Germanization establishment "Alpenland" in Oberweis, Austria, Polish children were registered in the local registration office, but each month *Lebensborn* officials removed all registration forms, thus concealing the fact that the children had stayed at the establishment. In

many of its institutions, the *Lebensborn* had its own registration units, and its headquarters in Munich, at 3—7 Herzog Max Strasse, housed the central register, which was probably burnt during a fire of the building, or was purposely sunk in the River Inn in Bavaria.

To be able to identify a child to the administrative authorities, foster families were issued certifices testifying to the German extraction of the children.

The question of the age of abducted children was sometimes rather awkward to the institution that handled a child. It happened at times that the foster families had some doubts in this respect. In one case, it was decided to dispel such doubts by means of the scientific authority of a university professor, Dr Becker of Marburg, who "established" the age of children on the basis of the differentiation of the skeleton of the hand in X-ray photos.

Even more embarrassing was the curiosity of the foster parents about the children's descent. A foster mother, Elfride Malisch, was only told that the *Lebensborn* had no documents regarding the child's origins and that the search would continue for some time. She was warned not to come to Munich as she "wouldn't be able to learn anything more in person". The *Lebensborn* concluded its letter with the wish that little Krystyna would be a source of much pleasure to her.[49]

The task of "transnationalization" was completed by entrusting a child to a foster family, reliable "as regards world outlook", and thus, as a rule, the family of an SS-man. Written contacts were maintained with the families, and the *Lebensborn* did its best to word the correspondence in an extremely warm tone, perhaps in an attempt to create an atmosphere which would suppress all the doubts and suspicions on the part of the child's foster parents.

The Nazi system of deportation of children for the purpose of Germanization has no precendent in the history of mankind, and the planned and institutional character of this campaign represents an outrage to 20th century civilization.

9. THE ROLE OF THE **LEBENSBORN** IN THE ABDUCTION OF CHILDREN

The *Lebensborn* developed its activities officially, as a registered association. Was it an organization with purely charitable objectives, as its advocates claim, or was it a product of national socialism within the SS organization, aiming to carry the criminal racialist ideology into practice for exclusively political reasons, as others maintain?

What has facilitated the task of many publications that are openly tendentious or falsify the truth is the fact that the files of the *Lebens-*

born headquarters were destroyed immediately after the war in suspicious circumstances, thus making it impossible to ever uncover all the activities of that institution. Moreover, the astonishing outcome of one of the Nuremberg trials resulted in much confusion and provided excellent opportunities for attacks by *Lebensborn* advocates.

From the very beginning of the *Lebensborn*'s existence, an unusual atmosphere surrounded it. The moral appraisal of the activity of that institution has always provoked controversies because, among other things, it recommended having children out of wedlock, providing they were "racially good". The particular requirements connected with this issue were guaranteed by statutory provisions.

The actual aims and practices of the *Lebensborn* were kept a strict secret, and for this reason *Reichsführer SS* Heinrich Himmler equipped the "association" with such attributes of power as its own registry and registration offices and the right to exercise legal guardianship.

During the war, the *Lebensborn* extended its activity to a number of conquered states: Austria, Norway, France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Yugoslavia and Poland. It also deported children from Czechoslovakia, Romania and the Soviet Union. Among the many Nazi institutions concerned with the appropriation of children, the *Lebensborn* distinguished itself by abducting the youngest, as a rule under six years of age.

The fact that the *Lebensborn* was endowed with such sweeping powers resulted from the position within the Nazi system held by the SS, an organization governed by its own laws and rules of conduct. Hence the *Lebensborn* played a dual role: that of an ordinary association under civil law and of an office within the organizational structure of the "SS state".

A programme drawn up by Dr Gregor Ebner, one of the *Lebensborn*'s top officials, explained the expediency of establishing registry and registration offices in all *Lebensborn* institutions. This was designed to facilitate the "official obligation to register" and, moreover, ensured that the birth of a child out of wedlock was a "complete secret".[50] Such an explanation was inconsistent with the truth, since — as has since been established — the *Lebensborn* looked after a considerable percentage of married women. The actual objective was concealed, as confirmed by some documents. On the one hand, the *Lebensborn* sought to encourage and facilitate the decision to give birth to a child in order to "fulfil the national duty"; on the other hand, it attempted to conceal evidence concerning the extraction of deported children.

The Ministry of Interior, by a confidential decree of December 10,

1942, ordered the establishment of a separate registration office for the children's home (*Gaukinderheim*) in Kalisz. The issue was discussed in more detail in a confidential order of Artur Greiser, dated December 23, 1942, and addressed to the mayor of Łódź, which emphasized that the *Lebensborn* was conducting its Germanization campaign at the orders of the *Reichsführer SS* and chief of the German police. In his order, Greiser referred to "former Polish children".[51] The running of the registration office was entrusted to the head of the Kalisz institution, who was provided with a round seal with the national emblem and the inscription *Polizeiliche Meldestelle II in Kalisch/Warthegau.* The activities of the registration office were limited to Polish children, while the personnel and other persons were to be registered in the ordinary registration office in Kalisz. This office, however, unlike other registration offices, did not have the right to issue certificates of residence, which made the whole matter entirely confidential.

The *Gaukinderheim* in Kalisz did not have its own registry office, since it was a transit establishment, placed only temporarily at the disposal of the *Lebensborn.* Other institutions of this kind, however, did have such offices, while at the *Lebensborn's* Munich headquarters there were the central registry office and the central register. The office issued false birth certificates on registry office forms no. A 51 (*Standesamt L München*), provided with the official seal with the national emblem and the inscription *Der Standesbeamte des Standesamtes L — München, Herzog Maxstr. 3/7.*

With a view to enabling the *Lebensborn* to issue official birth certificates to children abducted from other countries, the Third Reich's authorities resorted to a measure astounding from the legal viewpoint. Namely, the head of the *Lebensborn's* legal department, Dr Günter Tesch, agreed on the whole procedure over the telephone with chief counsel Eckelberg in the Ministry of Interior and drew up an official note which served as the "legal basis" for further action. It was decided that the *Lebensborn's* registry office in Munich would assume, with respect to abducted children, the powers of Registry Office I in Berlin within the framework of so-called civil status cases abroad, on the basis of para. 41 of the law on registry office records. The head of the *Lebensborn,* Max Sollmann, was authorized to issue necessary orders in this field on behalf of the Minister of Interior. Thus *Lebensborn* acquired the right to establish the probable place and date of birth of children and to give them German first names and surnames, in accordance with para. 25 of the afore-mentioned law. If no data were available, the town of Poznań was to be designated as the birth place. The age of children was to be determined on the basis of an opinion of the head of the *Lebesborn's* medical department, Dr Gregor Ebner. Children entrusted to foster families were to receive the names

of their foster parents immediately, if they were likely to be adopted.

As the *Lebensborn* bore no costs connected with the upkeep of and aid to the children entrusted to foster families, it was necessary to document officially circumstances serving as the basis for benefits of various kinds, ration cards, etc. Such powers actually were acquired by the *Lebensborn,* though it is not known in what way. The certificates issued by the Munich headquarters stated that the respective family had a child of German extraction who, on the order of the *Reichsführer SS,* was to be brought up in a German family. No one contributed to the upkeep of the child, and the child itself possessed neither property nor income. Because of the legal effects of such certificates, they had to be given a clearly official character. The proper chief of the police authenticated these certificates and affixed his round seal with the national emblem.

A certain number of such certificates have been preserved only thanks to the fact that they were kept by foster parents who, after the war, had to explain the possession of a child of foreign descent.

Turning a child over to a German family, the *Lebensborn*'s adoption and mediation department asked the foster parents, as a rule by letter, in what name the birth certificate should be issued: in the present name, already changed into a German one, or in the name of the foster parents.

Another privilege of the *Lebensborn* was in the field of institutional guardianship, based on the association's statute, which referred to para. 47 of the Reich's law on social care for youth (*Rechtsjugendwohlfahrtgesetz* — RJWG). Here, too, the discriminatory character of the statute manifested itself, since it stipulated that the *Lebensborn* took children under care at its own discretion. Naturally, the care was limited to "racially and physically" valuable children. Others had no chance to avail themselves of the aid of that institution.

The provisions concerning care for minors, contained in the German civil code (paras. 1773—1895), remained in force, and the establishment of guardianship and supervision over its exercise fell within the competence of the court. As regards illegitimate children, the youth office *(Jugendamt)* became the legal guardian by virtue of the law.

The *Lebensborn,* however, did not feel restricted by any regulations and became fully independent from the judicial organs. Only the adoption of a child, which required for its validity a court decree, compelled the *Lebensborn* to cooperate with the administration of justice. In such cases, no court examined the details regarding the extraction and past of the child. The information furnished by the *Lebensborn* had the full force of proof, and the act of adoption became a mere formality.

No heed was paid to the fact that the whole procedure in the do-

main of guardianship and adoption of foreign children constituted a flagrant violation of the provisions of the Hague Convention of June 12, 1902, which Germany had promulgated in its official gazette (RGBl, 1904, p. 240).

The prerogatives of state power with which the *Lebensborn* was equipped, are yet another example of the degeneration of the Third Reich's legal system and constitute yet another contribution toward a better knowledge of this phenomenon, so extensively discussed in the Nuremberg trials during the so-called "Justice" Case.

The *Lebensborn* started the organized abduction of children from Romania in the second half of 1941. The children came from Banat and were taken by the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VoMi) to "Schloss Langenzell" in Germany. Following careful "racial examinations", the *Lebensborn* took under care only a few of the 25 children, while the rest were sent for forced labour, entrusted to foster families, or subjected to sterilization.

The occupation of Norway in 1940 extended the *Lebensborn*'s activity to a territory inhabited by a population "of excellent Nordic value". A number of institutions for the care for mothers and children were established there.

Similar measures were taken in occupied France, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. The *Lebensborn*'s head, Max Sollmann, travelled to Paris to arrange these matters and Inge Viermetz, another *Lebensborn* official, went to Belgium and Holland. They were to see to it that "not a single drop of good blood be lost".

The same policy was applied with respect to Yugoslav children in Upper Carinthia and Lower Styria, to Czech children in Lidice and Lezaki and to Byelorussian children in Bobruisk. Because of her geographical location, however, Poland was the main source of children for the *Lebensborn* establishments. Therefore a "legal basis" for activity was created and a mode of work and cooperation with other institutions elaborated.

Max Sollmann had to admit at the Nuremberg trial that the content of the afore-mentioned decree no. 67/I faithfully represented the real activity of the *Lebensborn*.[52] He also confirmed that a proportion of the children from Poland had not known German and had spoken exclusively Polish, and that children's names had been changed.

Some practices of the *Lebensborn* were also revealed during the Nuremberg trial by other employees of that institution, but it was doubted whether they knew the whole truth.

Maria-Marta Heinze-Wisswede was only 22 years old when she was employed by the *Lebensborn* in the autumn of 1942. During her work there, she had contacts with abducted Polish, Czech and Romanian children.[53] It could be easily inferred from documents concerning those

children that they had no connections with Germany. They were classified into two groups: those allegedly of German extraction, and Polish children considered by the Race and Settlement Office in Łódź to lend themselves to Germanization. Most of the children from Poland belonged to the second group. Foreign children, prior to their being turned over to German families, stayed at establishments in Kalisz, Połczyn-Zdrój, Oberweis in Austria and in the so-called motherland schools in Achern/ /Baden and Niederaltreich. Particularly Polish children, Maria-Marta Heinze-Wisswede said, resisted the Germanization process.

Dr Robert Düker, M. D., was 32 years old when he went to work for the *Lebensborn*. He worked as the chief physician of its maternity clinics for seven years, i.e. until the end of the war. He had been in the SS from 1933 and had been promoted to the rank of *SS-Hauptsturmführer*. From 1938 until November 1943, he was employed in the "Pommern" institution in Połczyn-Zdrój, where he had contacts with Polish children brought there from the Puszczykowo camp. The children bore Polish names and spoke only Polish, "although they had fair hair and, by appearance, could be regarded as German children". They ranged in age from three to nine. After a year's stay in Połczyn-Zdrój, they were transferred to the "Sonnenwiese" establishment near Leipzig. Max Sollmann visited the Połczyn institution on two occasions. The establishment was also visited by Dr Ebner and Prof. Dr Becker of Marburg University. From December 1943 until March 1945, Robert Düker, served as the chief physician of the "Taunus" establishment in Wiesbaden. In 1944 several French children were brought there from a *Lebensborn* establishment in Paris that had been closed down. All of them were about one year old and all had French names. They came alone, without their mothers. After the evacuation of the Wiesbaden establishment, they were transferred to the establishment in Ansbach and next to Steinhöring.[54]

Dr Norbert Schwab, an Austrian citizen, started working for the *Lebensborn* in 1940. He had been a member of the NSDAP, unofficially, from 1933, but officially from the annexation of Austria. In the *Waffen SS* he held the rank of *Hauptsturmführer* and in the general SS hierarchy that of *Untersturmführer*. From December 1940 until June 1944 he served as the chief physician of the *Lebensborn*'s maternity clinic "Wienerwald" in Pernitz, and next succeeded Dr Robert Düker in his post in Połczyn-Zdrój. Children from the *Warthegau* were staying there at that time, and new groups arrived in the autumn of that year. In Połczyn the children already bore German names, but the register listed, next to their new names, also their former Polish names. A proportion of the children were turned over to foster families. The formalities connected with this were settled by a representative of the adoption department of the Munich headquarters. The depart-

ment frequently inquired about children from the *Warthegau*, because "it was interested in them, and many of them were turned over to German families". In February 1945, Dr Norbert Schwab evacuated the remaining children to the "Taunus" establishment in Wiesbaden, where there were already about 20 children from France and Belgium, from the establishments in Paris and Liège that had been closed down. Following the evacuation of the "Taunus" establishment, the children were taken to Ansbach and next to Steinhöring.[55]

Jakub Pfaffenberger was only 22 years old when he began working for the *Lebensborn*. In mid-1942, following training at the *Lebensborn* headquarters, he was appointed administrator of maternity and children's establishments. He deserved his appointment, because he held the rank of *Oberscharführer*. He served as administrator of the establishments in Połczyn-Zdrój, Zell am Hammerbach, Kohren-Sahlis near Leipzig and Oberweis in Austria. He realized that the children in Połczyn were not of German extraction because they spoke only Polish among themselves. They ranged in age from three to seven. In the "Alpenland" institution in Oberweis, all the children, save two Czech ones, were of Polish nationality. They numbered about 200 and had arrived from the children's home in Kalisz. Their records indicated that they had undergone "racial" examination. In Oberweis the children could already speak German, but they continued speaking Polish among themselves. Following the evacuation of the establishment in March 1945, about 60 children were transferred to the camp in Merie-Eich in Upper Austria. The fate of those children is unknown. Pfaffenberger remembered a number of names of Polish children, but only in the German version. They are: Krystyna Glaser, Eugen Franz, Willy Winter, Johann Musial, Leo Musial, Sigmunt Raschke, Ursula Belzig, Stephan Bittner, Walter Borchert, Martha Budner, Leo Hartmann, Fritz Markert, Johanna Markert, Heinrich Oelmann, Richard Rückert, Christine Safran, Martin Walter and Marinne Wolkmann.[56]

Of the above-mentioned children, one found was Leo Hartmann, true name Leon Twardecki, who was born in Sokołowo near Rogoźno on January 24, 1932. He was searched for by his mother, Zofia Twardecka. He was a close relative of Alojzy Twardecki, whose name had been changed by the *Lebensborn* to Alfred Hartmann and who was found and returned to Poland many years after the war.[57]

Falsifying birth certificates was an official occupation of the *Lebensborn*. Unfortunately, almost none of these documents have been preserved. Roman Roszatomski's birth certificate, issued by the *Lebensborn*'s resgistry office (*Standesamt L*), contains no data on his parents. It gives a false date of birth and designates as the place of birth Bruczków (Brockau), where a Germanization centre was located. That little Roman had been born in Łódź, the *Lebensborn* was fully

aware. This is shown by a letter from Dr Günter Tesch to Dr Gregor Ebner of July 16, 1943, raising the issue that some foster parents believe their children to be much younger than would appear from the date of birth and revealing the former and present first names and surnames of the following children: Kazimierz Kedroliński, alias Klaus Peter Bruckhardt, Roman Roszatomski, alias Hermann Lüdeking, Helena Fice, alias Helene Fischer, and Zygmunt Seradziński, alias Sigmunt Merkelbach. The three boys were born in Łódź and the girl in Poznań.[58]

Correspondence found in the Munich branch of the Berliner Verein insurance company shows that the *Lebensborn* insured deported children against illness. At the request of the *Lebensborn*'s legal department, towards the end of 1944 the Berliner Verein sent it a list of children insured and those whose policies had expired. The list was entitled: "A list of Eastern children (*Ostkinder*) insured under group insurance" and contained 119 names of children insured and 47 children whose policies had expired.[59] All of them are listed under the changed names. Careful research made it possible to ascertain, after the war, the true names of those children and to establish that they had been scattered all over Germany and Austria; some were even found in Spain.

One of the most closely guarded secrets of the *Lebensborn* was the fate of children born in Germany of foreign women workers. The number of those children ran into tens of thousands. Some officials revealed that the *Lebensborn* had had under its care about 92,000 children, including about 12,000 children born in its own establishments.

Another secret aspect of the *Lebensborn*'s activity was the running of "mating houses" (*Beggattungsheime*), where women were to give birth to "racially valuable" children.

A full list of the *Lebensborn*'s establishments and organizational units has never been found. The Nuremberg Tribunal also failed to establish such a list, although numerous witnesses had mentioned various institutions scattered all over the Third Reich and outside it.

The data collected from sources available to date confirm the existence of seven such establishments on Polish territory during the Nazi occupation. They included:

(1) The *Lebensborn* branch in Cracow, at 44 Krupnicza streeet. Its activity embraced the General Government.

(2) The *Lebensborn* branch in Bydgoszcz. It operated in the so-called territories incorporated into the Reich. Its work was subsequently taken over by the Munich headquarters.

(3) "Pommern" in Bad Polzin, now Połczyn-Zdrój. A facility presented by the town of Połczyn to Hitler, who turned it over to Himmler

for the needs of the *Lebensborn*. A mixed establishment: obstetrical and for the care of children.

(4) "Markwald" in an unknown locality, probably in Rabka. It was administered by the Cracow branch. Probably a mixed establishment: obstetrical and for the care of children.

(5) "Ostland-Heim" in Otwock near Warsaw. A mixed establishment: obstetrical and for the care of children.

(6) "Westerwald" near Poznań. No precise data are available. Some reports mention six to eight facilities situated in the vicinity.

(7) "Lebensborn-Siedlung-Heimstätte" in Smoszewo near Krotoszyn. Of the planned 500 cottages for pregnant women, 24 were built.

Apart from these establishments, the *Lebensborn* had its plenipotentiaries (*Bevollmächtige*) attached to the local SS and police commanders Their role was to further the attainment of the institution's goals.

Perhaps none of the criminal organizations within the "SS state" had so many advocates as the *Lebensborn* did. The defence started at the outset of the eighth Nuremberg trial, when the *Lebensborn* staff denied from the dock that they had participated in any way in crimes against humanity. What is more, they attempted to convince the Nuremberg Military Tribunal that the "association" had conducted only socially useful, charitable activity. The verdict of "not quilty", for lack of documentation and thus of sufficient evidence, issued by the First US Military Tribunal, furnished the *Lebensborn's* advocates with a basis for an increasingly aggressive struggle which at times turned into an attempt to create a myth about the exceptional humanitarian values of that institution and even into a demand that its activities be resumed. What favoured this campaign was the irretrievable loss of source materials that might serve as evidence.

Two years later, in 1950, the Denazification Tribunal in Munich found the accused guilty and expressed the view that it could not accept the findings of the US Military Tribunal in Nuremberg that the *Lebensborn* had allegedly been a charitable organization.[60]

The *Lebensborn* carried into practice the assumptions of racialist ideology, and assumed the role of a "guardian of German blood". During the war, it undertook the appropriation of children from the conquered nations for political ends. The only "evangelical" signpost for the *Lebensborn* was Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and *The Myth of the 20th Century* by Alfred Rosenberg. These publications justified the predatory territorial expansion of a "nation without space" (*Volks ohne Raum)* by dogmas about honour, race and blood.

The statutory aim to provide unmarried mothers and their children with care created only the appearance of charitable activity. This was not the real objective, which was to bring up children who, in future,

would reinforce the ranks of the Nazi army in order to carry on its conquests and to fan the flames of war.

After the war, physicians examined a certain number of children born in the *Lebensborn*'s establishments and found that almost each child of that "superrace" was mentally and physically retarded. Those children lacked one essential element: maternal love.

The *Lebensborn* carried out its work in secret and tried to remain, for the time being, behind the scenes for tactical reasons, in accordance with Heinrich Himmler's directives. Initially, the institution infringed moral norms; later, in wartime, it committed crimes and infringed the German penal code, though retaining immunity.

With the passage of time, the *Lebensborn*'s activities posed a growing social threat. The plans for the expansion of the institution were to be carried into practice after the victorious war, when the *Lebensborn* would become a pillar guaranteeing the existence of the "millennial Reich".

* * *

Brutally violating the rights of mankind and international law the German Third Reich abducted children from the occupied countries for Germanization purposes. As the Nazi plans provided for the obliteration of Poland from the map of the world and the annihilation or Germanization of the Polish nation, this campaign was carried out most systematically and ruthlessly precisely in Poland. The number of children deported from Poland was the largest among all occupied European countries.

As a result of this campaign, a total of over 200,000 children were deported from Poland. Of that number, only 15 to 20 per cent returned home after the war. As late as 1949, there were more than 20,000 Polish children in Bavaria, 6,000 children from Eastern Europe were living in Schleswig-Holstein, and over 7,000 children from Western and Northern Europe were living in Lower Saxony.

The question remains, how to explain the insignificant results of the search for and repatriation of Polish children.

The German population intentionally impeded the search for children of foreign extraction after the war, despite the orders of the occupation authorities to report such children. Evidence of this are the following figures, cited in a report of the UNRRA Child Search and Tracing Section for May 1947 [61]:

I.	In Hessen the Germans reported	0 children
	the occupation authorities identified	72 children
II.	In some Bavarian districts the Germans reported	0 children
	the occupation authorities identified	660 children

III.	In Baden-Würtemberg the Germans reported	276 children
	the occupation authorities identified	3,000 children

Records of interrogations of children in the capacity of witnesses show that German families disregarded the order to report foreign children. But even the resistance of the German population could not have stopped the repatriation if it had been conducted in accord with the principles adopted by the Allied powers in Berlin on June 5, 1945, and the decisions of the foreign ministers of the four powers reached in Moscow in April 1947, as well as the UN resolution of November 7, 1947.[62]

One reason for the failure of the repatriation campaign was the fact that the western powers made search and revindication conditional on meeting the following requirements:

1. evidence must be furnished of the place of residence of a child's parents in its home country;
2. the following documents must be furnished:
   (a) birth certificate of the child,
   (b) certificate of citizenship of the parents issued by the administrative authorities,
   (c) letter from the parents to the child,
   (d) statement of the parents or a welfare institution to the effect that the child would be ensured care, upbringing and education (in the British zone),
   (e) statement of a welfare institution or a proper authority to the effect that the child would be cared for (in the remaining zones);
3. the request for repatriation of the child must come from its parents, relatives, or appropriate authorities in the home country;
4. a child living with a German family could be refused repatriation if its parents had not been found;
5. refusal to repatriate children staying with Germans to whom they were related;
6. contacts between the parents and the child must be established by letter and in case a letter arrived, its authenticity could be questioned by German family with which the child was staying;
7. German families to be permitted to institute appeals against decisions regarding the repatriation of children;
8. children over 16 years of age to be permitted to decide for themselves.[63]

Most tragic under these circumstances was the fate of orphaned children whom nobody could claim. They were mostly children whose parents had been killed by the Nazis. One also cannot pass over the fact that Polish children were deported from Germany to overseas

countries. In 1946, for example, about 400 orphaned Polish children were taken to the United States, which is more than the total number of children repatriated to Poland in that year.

Worth quoting is a report of the Polish Red Cross Central Delegation for Germany concerning the action of revindication and repatriation of Polish children from German territory in June 1950.[64]

	As on June 30, 1950
a) Number of repatriated children	
1. US zone	1,195
2. British zone	1,040
3. French zone	196
4. Berlin	973
	3,404
b) Number of children waiting to be repatriated (after completion of documentation)	
1. US zone	12
2. British zone	14
3. French zone	6
4. Berlin	51
	83
c) Number of children whose documentation was pending	
1. US zone	931
2. British zone	193
3. French zone	17
4. Berlin	299
	1,440

The Polish Red Cross and the Polish Repatriation Mission did their very best to regain as many Polish children as possible, despite the difficulties that this encountered. The children were being anxiously awaited by their families, by the whole country.

An illustration of the search for children is provided by the case of Karol Stolka, whose daughters were missing in Germany.

Stefan Tyszka, a member of the Polish Red Cross Delegation for the US zone wrote from Regensburg, Bavaria, on May 3, 1947:

Dear Mr. Stolka,

We have received your letter dated March 25, 1947. We are very glad that we have been able to find your daughters. I have the impression that the joy will be mutual as soon as your daughters learn that you are alive — and we shall notify them very soon, the more so as this will be the first news about their father in many years.

We shall try to repatriate your daughters as soon as possible...

Karol Stolka, a resident of Łagiewniki, 19 Buczka street, wrote:

Dear Mr. Tyszka,

Thank you very much for your letter of May 3, 1947, which I have received today.

Please accept words of gratitude from me and my newly regained daughters (who arrived safe and sound on June 1, 1947, at 12 p.m.) for your efforts in tracing them and for the fact that you have reunited a family so much tormented and distressed by the invader.

Your impression was right. My joy at the sight of my long-unseen daughters was really beyond description.

There is one thing, however, that makes me sad and hurts my feelings as a father. The reason is my youngest regained daughter, Stefania. The Nazis, who tortured me for four years in a concentration camp, made her a cripple, too, by cutting off her right leg below the knee. I would therefore be very grateful to you if you could plead with the proper UNRRA authorities, which promised her an artificial leg, to send it as promptly as possible.

Sincerely yours,
Karol Stolka [65]

So much say the preserved letters concerning one of the many cases of repatriation of Polish children kidnapped by the Nazis. It is worth adding that Karol Stolka, who also lost four sons, had been arrested for his patriotism and spent four years in a concentration camp. His wife died of a heart attack when he was arrested by the Gestapo, and his six children were deported to the Reich for the purpose of Germanization.

Alojzy Twardecki, found and regained by his family many years after the war, said:

I chose Poland because my conscience told me to. I did not choose Poland because she has this system or another. I chose her because she is my Motherland, for which my ancestors, including my father, gave their lives [66].

Adaptation to new conditions, to a new environment, was not always easy. Life had to be built anew.

NOTES

[1] IMT, Case VIII.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] AGK, doc. 416/PS-9.
[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Statement in the German language, made and sworn in Nuremberg on July 28, 1947, before an investigator of the Evidence Division of the Prosecutor's Department at the US Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, photocopy no. 5236 from the records of Case VIII.

[7] *Ibid.*, photocopy no. 5126.

[8] IMT, Case VIII.

[9] GKBZHwP, file no. 794/180.

[10] Record of an interrogation of Jan Sulisz on May 14, 1946, by an examining magistrate of Division III of the District Court in Łódź, file no. S. 6/46.

[11] *Ibid.*, record of an interrogation of Helena Fornalczyk on May 29, 1946.

[12] *Ibid.*, record of an interrogation of Stanisława Marczuk on June 5, 1946.

[13] IMT. Case VIII. Biuletyn GKBZHwP. vol. V, p. 43.

[14] OKBZH in Katowice, file no. OK. Ka/Ko 235/76.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Record of an interrogation on May 18, 1946, in the records of Artur Greiser's case, Biuletyn GKBZHwP, vol. V, p. 49.

[19] AGK, records of Forster's trial, vol. XIV.

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] IMT, records of Case VIII.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] OKBZH in Katowice, file no. OK. Ka/Ko. 235/76.

[25] Record of an interrigation on May 27, 1946, by an examining magistrate of the District Court in Łódź, file no. s. 6/46.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] IMT, records of Case VIII.

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] OKBZH in Katowice. file no. OK. Ka./Ko. 235/76.

[37] Speech by Heinrich Himmler in Zhitomir on September 16, 1942, IMT, records of Case VIII.

[38] R. Hraber, *Jakim prawem?*, Katowice 1962.

[39] OKBZH in Łódź, file no. S/46. Record of an interrogation on April 25, 1946.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] Files of the SS Race and Settlement Head Office in Łódź in the files of the plenipotentiary for the repatriation of Polish children from Germany. Photocopies used in IMT Case VIII.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] A. Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*, München 1939.

[48] IMT, records of Case VIII, doc. NO-2793.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] Document in the archive of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich, file "Lebensborn".

[51] IMT, records of Case VIII, photocopy no. 2789.

[52] AGK, doc. No-4706, file no. 1168/62 X/I.

[53] *Ibid.*, doc. No-4822, file no. 62-X-II-1316.

[54] IMT, records of Case VIII.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] A. Twardecki, *Szkoła janczarów*, Warszawa 1969.

[58] IMT, records of Case VIII.

[59] Records at the International Tracing Service (hereafter ITS), Arolsen.

[60] Records of the Denazificaction Tribunal in Munich in the case versus the *Lebensborn* management; R. Hrabar, *Lebensborn, czyli źródło życia*, Katowice 1976.

[61] Records at ITS, op. cit.

[62] GKBZHwP, files of the Polish Red Cross Central Board in Warsaw.

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] *Ibid.*

[66] A. Twardecki, op. cit

4

The Fate of Jewish Children

The Third Reich's authorities strove for the total extermination of the Jews, initially in their own country and later in the occupied territories. The racialist laws on citizenship of the Reich and the protection of German blood furnished a legal basis for many subsequent undertakings. On September 21, 1939, a secret conference on the Jewish question was held in Berlin. Following this conference, Reinhard Heydrich issued directives concerning the treatment of the Jewish population.[1] Various solutions to the Jewish problem in Poland and the rest of Europe were examined there. One solution proposed the establishment of a reservation for Jews in the vicinity of Nisko on the San, and another a ghetto on Madagascar after the victory over France. The decision on the total physical extermination of Jews terminated any discussions on this subject.[2]

The deportation and concentration of the Jewish population in ghettoes in occupied Poland started in late 1939. The first ghetto was set up in Piotrków Trybunalski in October 1939. On December 10, a ghetto was established in Łódź — the largest one in the *Warthegau*. The largest ghetto in the General Government was set up in Warsaw on October 2, 1940. In Cracow, a ghetto was created on March 3, 1941. All in all, there were over 300 ghettoes in Poland. Their number gradually diminished as the Jewish population was concentrated in large towns and next exterminated.

The forms of extermination before resettlement to the ghettoes as well as the living conditions in those isolated districts of towns affected children in particular. Expropriation and plunder, the blocking by the Nazi authorities of Jewish bank accounts, the prohibition against owning larger sums of money, limitation of payments to Jews, elimination of Jews from many branches of trade, confiscation of real estate — these were the elements that contributed toward a deterioration of the living standard and the pauperization of Jewish families already in the first days of the occupation. The inability to earn money, resettlement and persecution caused a steady decline. Next to acts of terror sanctioned by Nazi laws, there were numerous instances of licence. The Nazis broke

into homes and stores, confiscating food supplies, goods, etc. In the spring of 1940 food rations were differentiated to the disadvantage of the Jewish population. What symbolized the debasement and isolation of the Jews was an armband with the star of David introduced in the General Government by a decree of November 23, 1939, and effective as of December 1. The star was also worn by children.[3]

A decree of October 15, 1941, prohibited anyone, under the penalty of death, to leave the Jewish district without permission and to give shelter to Jews.[4]

Ghettoes became the site of the extermination of many thousands of children. Sunk to the depths of misery and humiliation, crammed in their hasty shelters, the children were hungry, weak and ragged. The ghetto population was starving and dying of hunger and the children suffered most. The Nazi policy toward the Jewish population aimed at starving them to death. The youngest ones often lacked the courage and strength to go out into the street, where throngs were milling around. So they sat crouching day and night, in cold and darkness.

The density of population in the ghettoes was tremendous. In the Warsaw ghetto, for example, among the 400,000 persons crammed from the very outset within a very small area, there were about 100,000 children of school age, under 15. The situation deteriorated when as a result of the resettlement of Jews from the Warsaw district, the ghetto population rose to 500,000. The children of the "resettlers" found the living conditions even more difficult. The resettlers arrived already impoverished, without means of subsistence. Apart from hand luggage, they were permitted to take nothing else with them.

Anna Kubiak, in an article dealing with the Jewish children during the Nazi occupation, writes:

> Obviously, the children also feel the lack of parental care, yearn for school, woods, grass, play. All the time, however, the terrible cry of hunger incessantly pervades their talk. Of all the children's cries of despair, this cry always reverberates most loudly. The same is true of adults. Let us reach for ghetto literature. The most prominent authors write about hunger as the prevailing phenomenon in the ghetto...[5].

The preserved memoirs and diaries of ghetto children are very similar to one another. In all of them, hunger and death are the main themes.

Below is an excerpt from the diary of an unidentified girl from the Łódź ghetto. All that is known about her is that her name was Esterka or Minia and that she came from a worker's family:

> There is no justice in the world, and thus in the ghetto. There is great panic among the people. And hunger to add to it. The struggle against death by hunger. The life is awful, the conditions are dreadful, and there is no food at all[6].

The Łódź ghetto was the largest one in the so-called territories incorporated in the Reich. When it was fenced in on May 1, 1940, over 160,000 people were living there. Later the Łódź ghetto received Jews from other towns as well as about 20,000 foreign Jews. All in all, about 250,000 persons passed through the ghetto during the occupation. The author of the above-quoted recollections was one of them. The part of her diary preserved concerns the period of February and March 1942. In Ferbuary 1,873 persons died in the ghetto, 7,025 persons were "resettled", four persons committed suicide, two persons were shot while trying to climb the wall surrounding the ghetto, and there were 28 cases of typhus. In March, 2,244 persons died, 24,687 persons were "resettled", 19 persons committed suicide. And these are only the official data taken from the ghetto chronicle.[7]

Dawid Sierakowiak from the Łódź ghetto was born on July 25, 1924, and came from a poor petit bourgeoisie family. Before the war, he attended a private secondary school of the Association of Jewish Schools in Łódź and drew a special scholarship for particularly gifted students. During the occupation, Dawid and his family were put in the Łódź ghetto. While there, he wrote a diary. His loved ones, mother and father, died in the ghetto, and his sister was taken to Auschwitz after the liquidation of the ghetto. Dawid himself, due to general emaciation, fell ill and died of tuberculosis at the age of 19, on August 8, 1943. Below are excerpts from his diary:

Sunday, October 12, 1941

My shoes get soaked so much that I am really in despair. Today I filled another application with Rumkowski [Mordechaj Chaim Rumkowski, the Jewish president in the ghetto — author's note], kindly requesting him for a job and shoes.

Thursday, October 23, 1941

For the time being, my career as a 'schoolboy' has been halted at least. I do not know whether I shall be a schoolboy again. I really doubt it. But who knows? The most important thing now is to earn some money to keep body and soul together. Just to endure, to survive...

Friday, June 26, 1942

Nothing has changed. I keep on working and starving, and there are no prospects for even the slightest change...

Saturday, July 4, 1942

Today my mother brought me from work some radish leaves which recently have become fashionable in the ghetto as a foodstuff. The soup was quite good, although I doubt its nutritive value. I am so weak that immediately after work I go to bed and sleep, something which has never occurred before. I no longer read at all...

Thursday, August 6, 1942

We are having a great trouble this week because of the illness of my friend's mother... She, just like Olek, is terribly swollen and in the throes of death. Although this is 'nothing new or special' today, because of my friendship with Olek and the friendship of our mothers, it makes the worst impression on us. Last year Olek's father died, swollen with hunger, and now his mother is dying. Olek himself is in a pretty bad condition but no one here can help us in any way.

Sunday, August 9, 1942

Kamusiewiczowa has died. One day before her death the doctor said that should her diet have included 3 dkg of sugar and 10 dkg of meat daily for a period of at least one week, she would have survived. But in the ghetto such treatment is physically impossible for at least 50 per cent of the population.

Thursday, September 3, 1942

The alarming news spread in the evening that the Germans had allegedly demanded the delivery of all children under ten years af age for the purpose of deportation and, most likely, extermination. The situation is very similar to that which existed in all neighbouring towns before resettlement.

Friday, September 4, 1942

Yesterday's tragic news has alas proved true. The Germans are demanding all children under ten, old men over 65 as well as all those ill, swollen, crippled, unable to work and those who are not working. There is great panic in the town... The registration office was sealed after it had drawn up the lists, so as to prevent any attempts at rescue by falsifying birth certificates...

In the morning. the office of the School Department had registered for work children aged eight and nine, but at 12 a.m. it was announced that the lists had been invalidated. The atmosphere of panic is constantly growing... At 5 p.m. Rumkowski and Wierkowski, the head of many departments, spoke in the square (13 Lutomierska street). They said that 'the sacrifice of children and old men was inevitable, that nothing could be done', and they asked that the deportation proceed undisturbed.

Saturday, September 5, 1942

There has been unrest in the town since early morning because the news has spread with lightning speed that at night the Germans detained children and old men whom they put in empty hospitals, whence they would be deported on Monday (3,000 persons daily). The shouting, struggling and crying of the mothers and all other witnesses were beyond description. The parents of deported children went literally mad [8].

This was known as a *Sperre* or closure. For the deportation of the ghetto population was often preceded by the resettlement of unproductive elements: the ill, the elderly and children. This was done in ghettoes where the population worked in factories and was designed to en-

sure the maximum utilization of labour. Similar actions took place in the ghettoes in Biatystok (August 1943) and Cracow (March 13, 1943). In Włodawa, Lublin region, all parents were ordered on July 14, 1942, to bring their children to the square. Nobody voluntarily obeyed the order, however, and the Nazis managed to catch about 200 children who were deported to Sobibór.

The children in the ghettoes were swollen with hunger, some were unable to walk, and most had their bodies covered with sores and ulcers. It was only natural that parental care in the ghettoes was minimal, and social welfare almost non-existent. The charitable institutions, which attempted to carry on their pre-war activity, tried to render aid to the children in various forms, but in the conditions of the ghetto it was practically impossible.

The most active social welfare institutions in the ghettoes, especially in the first period of their existence, were the children's hostels. Children who had been admitted to them were provided with tolerable clothes, food and shelter.

The progressive elements among the ghetto population, aware of the tragic situation of the children, attempted to remedy the evil as much as they could. They often fought with persistence and dedication to save a child from death by hunger, epidemic or extermination. They deserve credit for creating so-called cubby-holes, house committees and day rooms and for running popular canteens.[9] The "cubby-holes" were organized mostly by young people who gathered children from individual houses and gave them food collected among tenants or obtained from a social welfare institution or the *Judenrat*. There were 165 such "cubby-holes" in Warsaw in November 1941.

A special role was played by the canteens, which apart from their official purpose, served as clandestine schools. The staff of the canteens included teachers.

As the process of extermination grew in intensity, the official welfare institutions had to cease their activity, and the aid rendered spontaneously by society rapidly diminished. There was a growing number of homeless children, deprived of any aid, "children of the street" who became a common phenomenon in the ghetto. Thousands of such children wandered about the streets, without shelter, without any warm food, without shoes and adequate clothes, in rags. The children were looking for food. Sometimes they had to feed the whole family, and then, depending on the existing conditions and their resourcefulness, the children worked, traded, "smuggled", or begged. As long as this was possible, the children sold remaining clothes or household items, or, for the money obtained from the sale of saccharine, cigarettes, matches, bagels, shoe-laces, etc., the little pedlars purchased foodstuffs. The picture of ten or 12-year-old children with boxes hanging around

their necks, containing goods for sale, was a typical view at street corners, hallways, or market places in the ghetto. They stood there from early morning until late at night regardless of the weather, during rain and frost. Their earnings were very small and equalled at best the price of a loaf of bread, or even half a loaf, but this money was often the basis of subsistence of a whole family. The risk was tremendous. The German gendarme was the most dangerous enemy. The little pedlars attempted to avoid this danger, but nevertheless they often returned home beaten up and without their "goods". Hunger, however, forced them to forget about it soon, and they returned to the streets.

After the ghettoes had been walled in, the children engaged in "smuggling". They sneaked to the Aryan side for food, but this involved an even greater danger. For "smuggling" was liable to the death penalty.

The children squeezed through holes and crevices. They were to be seen at all gateways to the ghetto, at the walls, at the outlets of conduits, in all places where "smuggling" was going on. The dexterity and experience acquired did not protect them against thousands of dangers. The gendarmes standing at the gateways to the ghetto shot at them, they were beaten and tortured and the food confiscated. The poet, Henryka Łazowertówna, dedicated the following poem to them:

Past rubble, fence, barbed wire,
Past soldiers guarding the Wall,
Starving but still defiant,
I softly steal past them all.
Clutching a bag of sacking,
With only rags to wear,
With limbs numbed by winter,
And hearts numbed by despair.*

The mortality rate in the ghettoes was tremendous. In the Warsaw ghetto, 900 persons died on the average each day in January 1941, including every tenth child, and in the summer of that year this number rose to over 5,000 persons. All in all, during the three and half years of the existence of the Warsaw ghetto, about 100,000 persons died there of "natural" causes and a very large proportion of them were children. Many appeals for the children were addressed to both the Polish and Jewish population by Dr Janusz Korczak, a prominent Warsaw physician who dedicated his life to the care of children.

The ghettoes constituted an intermediary in the total extermination of the Jews. At a conference presided over by Reinhard Heydrich and held on January 20, 1942, in Berlin in one of the buildings of the Reich Main Security Office, the so-called Am Grossen Wannsee, it was deci-

* Translated by Hilda Rusiecka.

ded to "ultimately resolve the question of [the estimated] 11,292,300 Jews living in the territory of the Reich and in the remaining countries of Europe" [10] by way of physical extermination. Josef Bühler, State Secretary to Governor General Hans Frank, came out with the proposal to exterminate Polish Jews in the first place, substantiating it, among other things, by the fact that most Jews were unable to work.[11]

The Nazis proceeded to the extermination of Jews in the General Government in the spring of 1942 by setting up the following centres of immediate extermination: Bełżec in March, Sobibór in May and Treblinka in mid-July. Groups of Jews were also sent to the Auschwitz and Majdanek camps.[12] They included many children, most of whom went straight to the gas chambers.

On July 22, 1942, under the pretext of resettlement, the Nazis started the mass-scale annihilation of the Warsaw ghetto.[13] People were gathered in the *Umschlagplatz,* where the final selection was carried out. *En route,* those who attempted to escape, tried to contact someone outside the column, or could not keep pace, were shot.

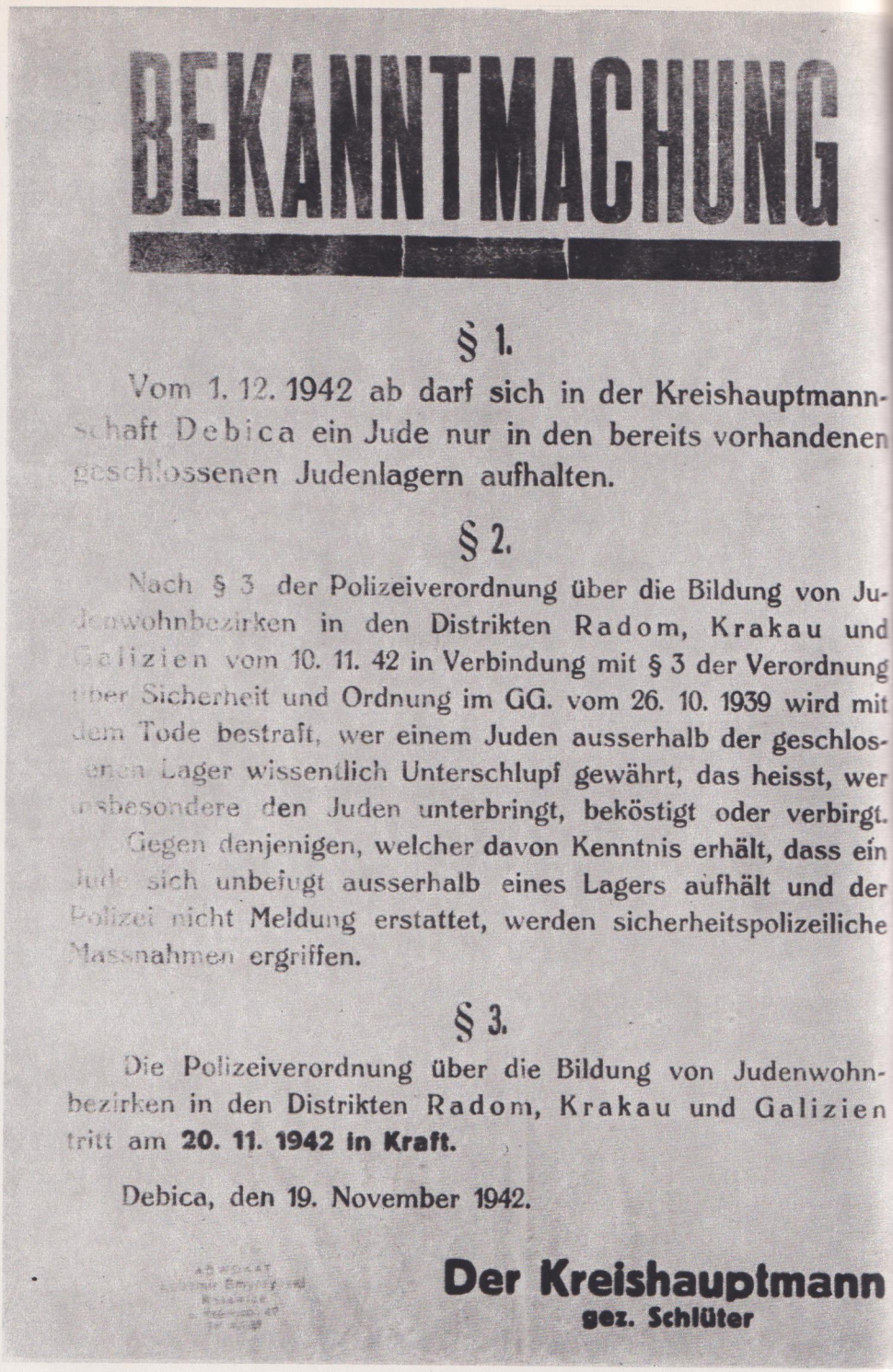
Neither were orphanages spared. As early as August 1, children began to be deported from all social welfare institutions. Orphanages were liquidated almost each day, and the children's home on Ogrodowa street in Warsaw, directed by Dr Janusz Korczak, was one of the first to fall victim to the Nazis [14]. Dr Korczak was seen for the last time on August 5, 1942, when, surrounded by children, he marched through the streets of the ghetto. The children lined up in fours and followed the doctor, who headed the column holding two children by the hands. The next groups were led by the personnel of the orphanage. The column carried the flag of the Home, the green flag of hope. The destination of the children were the incinerators of the Treblinka crematorium.

Also deported on that day were the boys from the hostel on Twarda street and the girls from the shelter on Śliska street. Almost all orphanages in the ghetto were liquidated in the first days of August, and about 4,000 children were deported from them for extermination.

The total casualties of the first phase of liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, which lasted from July 22 until September 21, 1942, amounted, according to a report of the Jewish National Committee of November 15, 1942, to about 275,000 persons, of whom 11,000 were deported to labour camps, over 6,000 were executed on the spot, about 3,600 died in the ghetto, 600 committed suicide, while the remaining ones were murdered in Treblinka.[15] It is not known exactly how many children were among them, but their number was certainly a large one considering the fact that persons unable to work were murdered in the first place.

At the end of October, 1942, having murdered about 70 to 80 per cent

The Extermination of Jewish Children



BEKANNTMACHUNG

§ 1.

Vom 1. 12. 1942 ab darf sich in der Kreishauptmannschaft Debica ein Jude nur in den bereits vorhandenen geschlossenen Judenlagern aufhalten.

§ 2.

Nach § 3 der Polizeiverordnung über die Bildung von Judenwohnbezirken in den Distrikten Radom, Krakau und Galizien vom 10. 11. 42 in Verbindung mit § 3 der Verordnung über Sicherheit und Ordnung im GG. vom 26. 10. 1939 wird mit dem Tode bestraft, wer einem Juden ausserhalb der geschlossenen Lager wissentlich Unterschlupf gewährt, das heisst, wer insbesondere den Juden unterbringt, beköstigt oder verbirgt.

Gegen denjenigen, welcher davon Kenntnis erhält, dass ein Jude sich unbefugt ausserhalb eines Lagers aufhält und der Polizei nicht Meldung erstattet, werden sicherheitspolizeiliche Massnahmen ergriffen.

§ 3.

Die Polizeiverordnung über die Bildung von Judenwohnbezirken in den Distrikten Radom, Krakau und Galizien tritt am **20. 11. 1942 in Kraft.**

Debica, den 19. November 1942.

Der Kreishauptmann
gez. Schlüter

An announcement on the setting up of ghettoes for the Jewish population

OGŁOSZENIE

§ 1.

Począwszy od 1. 12. 1942 wolno na terenie Kreishauptmannschaft Debica żydowi przebywać tylko w już istniejących zamkniętych obozach żydowskich.

§ 2.

W myśl § 3 rozporządzenia policyjnego o tworzeniu żydowskich dzielnic mieszkaniowych w dystryktach Radom, Krakau i Galicja z 10. 11. 1942 w związku z § 3 rozporządzenia o bezpieczeństwie i porządku w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie z 26. 10. 1939 podlega karze śmierci, kto żydowi poza obrębem zamkniętych obozów świadomie udziela schronienia, t. zn. kto w szczególności umieszcza żyda u siebie, żywi go lub ukrywa.

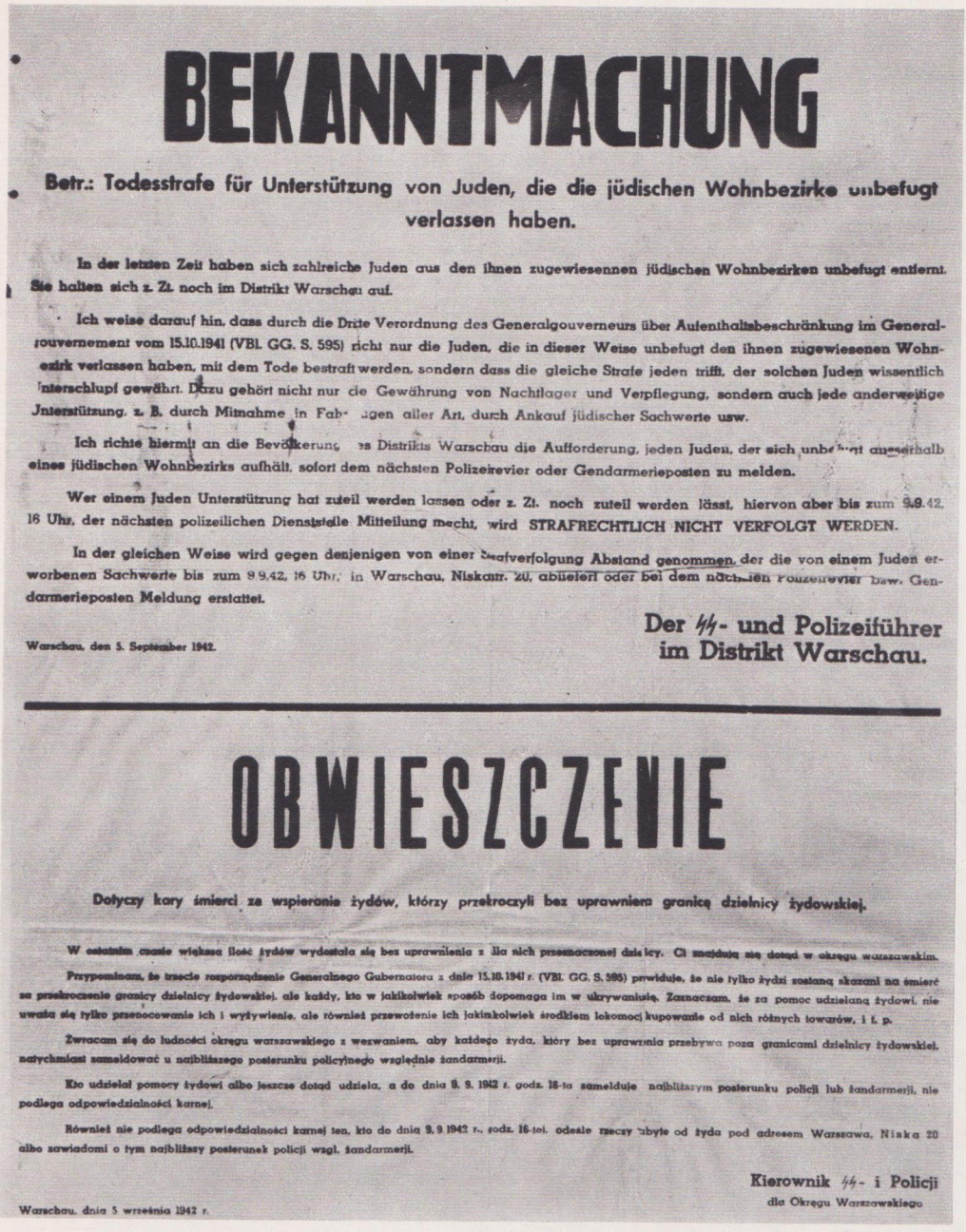
Wobec tego, kto uzyska wiadomość o tym, że jakiś żyd bezprawnie przebywa poza obrębem obozu a nie zgłosi tego policji, zastosowane będą policyjne środki bezpieczeństwa.

§ 3.

Rozporządzenie policyjne o tworzeniu żydowskich dzielnic mieszkaniowych w dystryktach Radom, Krakau i Galicja wchodzi w życie z dniem **20. 11. 1942.**

Debica, dnia 19 listopada 1942.

Der Kreishauptmann
gez. Schlüter



BEKANNTMACHUNG

Betr.: Todesstrafe für Unterstützung von Juden, die die jüdischen Wohnbezirke unbefugt verlassen haben.

In der letzten Zeit haben sich zahlreiche Juden aus den ihnen zugewiesennen jüdischen Wohnbezirken unbefugt entfernt. Sie halten sich z. Zt. noch im Distrikt Warschau auf.

Ich weise darauf hin, dass durch die Dritte Verordnung des Generalgouverneurs über Aufenthaltsbeschränkung im Generalgouvernement vom 15.10.1941 (VBl. GG. S. 595) nicht nur die Juden, die in dieser Weise unbefugt den ihnen zugewiesenen Wohnbezirk verlassen haben, mit dem Tode bestraft werden, sondern dass die gleiche Strafe jeden trifft, der solchen Juden wissentlich Unterschlupf gewährt. Dazu gehört nicht nur die Gewährung von Nachtlager und Verpflegung, sondern auch jede anderweitige Unterstützung, z. B. durch Mitnahme in Fahrzeugen aller Art, durch Ankauf jüdischer Sachwerte usw.

Ich richte hiermit an die Bevölkerung des Distrikts Warschau die Aufforderung, jeden Juden, der sich unbefugt ausserhalb eines jüdischen Wohnbezirks aufhält, sofort dem nächsten Polizeirevier oder Gendarmerieposten zu melden.

Wer einem Juden Unterstützung hat zuteil werden lassen oder z. Zt. noch zuteil werden lässt, hiervon aber bis zum 9.9.42, 18 Uhr, der nächsten polizeilichen Dienststelle Mitteilung macht, wird STRAFRECHTLICH NICHT VERFOLGT WERDEN.

In der gleichen Weise wird gegen denjenigen von einer Strafverfolgung Abstand genommen, der die von einem Juden erworbenen Sachwerte bis zum 9.9.42, 18 Uhr, in Warschau, Niskastr. 20, abliefert oder bei dem nächsten Polizeirevier bzw. Gendarmerieposten Meldung erstattet.

Warschau, den 5. September 1942.

Der SS- und Polizeiführer im Distrikt Warschau.

OBWIESZCZENIE

Dotyczy kary śmierci za wspieranie żydów, którzy przekroczyli bez uprawnień granicę dzielnicy żydowskiej.

W ostatnim czasie większa ilość żydów wydostała się bez uprawnienia z ilo nich przeznaczonej dzielnicy. Ci znajdują się dotąd w okręgu warszawskim.

Przypominam, że trzecie rozporządzenie Generalnego Gubernatora z dnia 15.10.1941 r. (VBl. GG. S. 595) przewiduje, że nie tylko żydzi zostaną skazani na śmierć za przekroczenie granicy dzielnicy żydowskiej, ale każdy, kto w jakikolwiek sposób dopomaga im w ukrywaniu. Zaznaczam, że za pomoc udzielaną żydowi, nie uważa się tylko przenocowanie ich i wyżywienie, ale również przewożenie ich jakimkolwiek środkiem lokomocji kupowanie od nich różnych towarów, i t. p.

Zwracam się do ludności okręgu warszawskiego z wezwaniem, aby każdego żyda, który bez uprawnia przebywa poza granicami dzielnicy żydowskiej, natychmiast zameldować u najbliższego posterunku policyjnego względnie żandarmerji.

Kto udzielał pomocy żydowi albo jeszcze dotąd udziela, a do dnia 9. 9. 1942 r. godz. 18-ta zamelduje najbliższym posterunku policji lub żandarmerji, nie podlega odpowiedzialności karnej.

Również nie podlega odpowiedzialności karnej ten, kto do dnia 9. 9. 1942 r., godz. 18-tej, odesłe rzeczy zbyte od żyda pod adresem Warszawa, Niska 20 albo zawiadomi o tym najbliższy posterunek policji wzgl. żandarmerji.

Kierownik SS- i Policji
dla Okręgu Warszawskiego

Warschau, dnia 5 września 1942 r.

An announcement on the death penalty for persons lending assistance to Jews

Children were treated on equal terms with adults

The Jewish population being driven to the ghettoes

A section of the Warsaw ghetto shortly after it was surrounded by a wall

A German gendarme is searching children who left the ghetto to look for food

Most children in the Warsaw ghetto earned their living by begging

Homeless children in the streets of the Warsaw ghetto

Starving to death

Deprived of their families and homes, they were forced to sleep on the pavement

Misery

They died in their homes and in the streets

Jews being led out of the ghetto after the uprising had been quelled

Disposal of corpses

Formation of a transport of Jewish children deported to Treblinka

The children did not yet understand but the father perhaps knew what was to be expected at the end of the road

Formation of a march column which is to set off from the platform to the gas chamber

They are marching unaware of their fate

The last but one stage where they will be stripped naked. The escorting SS-men assure them that after a bath they will go to the camp barracks

Before the execution

of the Polish citizens of Jewish descent living in the General Government, the Nazi authorities assembled the remaining Jewish population in so-called vestigial ghettos (*Restgetto*). They were intended to be sites of concentration of labour, and thus there was no room for children in them. In the Warsaw ghetto, following the first phase of deportation, many children were hiding in "shops", where their parents and elder brothers and sisters were working. Toward the end of October 1942, a registration of the population was carried out in their homes, and working persons were accorded registration numbers. In this way, the ghetto population was divided into registered inhabitants and "squatters". To catch the latter, blockades of "shops" were arranged. The Nazis carried out a real pogrom of children in the course of a campaign which started on November 6, 1942. For several consecutive days, they searched for the youngest inhabitants of the ghetto who had managed to survive. It is estimated that by mid-November about 90,000 children had been murdered in the Warsaw ghetto.

On January 9, 1943, Heinrich Himmler himself appeared in the Warsaw ghetto. The final phase of liquidation started on January 18, and an uprising broke out in the ghetto on January 19.

A report by the general of the police and SS, Jürgen Stroop, thus described the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto:

> I decided to destroy the entire Jewish district by burning down one block after another... Jews emerged from their hidings or dugouts almost at every step. Sometimes they stayed in the burning buildings until, because of heat and for fear of being burnt alive, they had to jump from upper floors... They tried to crawl with broken legs across the streets to blocks which were not yet on fire [16].

Other documents describe these scenes in the following way:

> They shoot at those attempting to get out of the flames. Therefore, mothers throw out their children from the burning buildings, having previously blind-folded them, and next jump themselves [17].

In the course of Stroop's operation, 65,000 persons, including about 2,500 children, were murdered of the total of 70,000 inhabitants of the ghetto at that time, about three per cent of whom were children under nine.[18]

Louis Frydman, today a scientist at Kansas University and then an 11-year-old boy, who survived the tragedy of the ghettoes in Piotrków Trybunalski, Łódź and Warsaw, thus relates his story:

> Upon the outbreak of the uprising, I, my parents and my elder brother found ourselves in an underground shelter. The entrance was buried, and we maintained liaison with others only through sewers. Stroop said of this shelter that at first they had tried to locate it for eight days and then opened the entrance with dy-

namite. The Nazis gave us an hour to leave; otherwise, they would blow the shelter up. We left. The men were immediately separated from the group and executed within our sight. My father was killed among them. The women and the children were driven through the burning ghetto to the railway station. We were taken to Majdanek, where my mother died on November 3.

As men were needed for work, I and my brother volunteered. I was too young, and they did not want to hire me, but eventually they did. We were taken to Budzyń, and from there to Radom, where we worked in an ammunition factory... The front was approaching. A selection was carried out. The women and children from the labour camp in Radom were deported to Auschwitz while the men were given various jobs. I had a bit of luck again. I and my brother were taken deep into the Reich... After the war, I stayed in UNRRA camps for children in the US occupation zone, from where we were taken... to the United States [19].

Such were the facts. So many tragedies typical of Jewish children from the ghetto, and so little luck, for only few managed to survive.

A 16-year-old girl who had escaped from the ghetto before the outbreak of the uprising and was hiding with a Polish family until the end of the war, says:

It is night, a frightful night. Glows of fires can be seen in the sky. The sky is ablaze. A red, horrifying sky. And the terrible thoughts in my mind. There, in those flames, my father, my grandfather and my brothers are dying. I want to run and help them. To save them. I cannot. I am forced to stand here. And I watch it passively, as if it were a film unfolding itself before my eyes. People are dying there: children, mothers, husbands, elderly people who have done no wrong to the world [20].

NOTES

[1] Nuremberg document PS-3363.

[2] H. Krausnik, "Judenverwaltung", [in:] *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, München 1967.

[3] Verwaltungsblatt des Generalgouverners für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete, 1939, p. 61.

[4] VBl GG, 1941, p. 595.

[5] A. Kubiak, "Dzieciobójstwo podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej", Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego (Bulletin of the Jewish Historical Institute) (hereafter Biuletyn ŻIH), 1956, no. 17—18, p. 79.

[6] "Polska Anna Frank", ed. by L. Dobroszycki, Mówią wieki, 1958, no. 7, pp. 4—11.

[7] Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute, records of the Superior Jewish Authority in Łódź, Biuletyn Kroniki Centralnej, nos. 9, 10, 11.

[8] D. Sierakowiak, *Dziennik*, Warszawa 1960, p. 87—90.

[9] R. Sakowska, "Ludzie z dzielnicy zamkniętej", *Żydzi w Warszawie w okresie hitlerowskiej okupacji*, Warszawa 1975, pp. 117—130.

[10] Nuremberg document PS-710; R. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Chicago 1961.

[11] *Ibid.*, NG-2586.

[12] C. Pilichowski, *Fałszerstwo czy prowokacja. Odwetowcy w roli oskarżycieli*, Warszawa 1977.

[13] Report of the Jewish National Committee of Nov. 15, 1942; Biuletyn ŻIH, 1946, no. 1.

[14] A. Kubiak, op. cit., p. 98.

[15] Report of the Jewish National Committee, op. cit.

[16] Biuletyn GKBZHwP, 1960, vol. XI.

[17] Documents and materials of the Central Historical Commission of the Central Committee of Polish Jews, Łódź 1946, vol. II, p. 415.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] GKBZHwP.

[20] H. Radomska-Strzemecka, "Postawy wywołane przez wojne u młodzieży" (Attitudes Shaped by War in Young People), a paper read at an international conference, Otwock 1948.

5

Children Saved from Extermination: Help from Polish Society

Confronted with the threat of extermination Polish society undertook a struggle for the life and health of its children. This struggle, waged in defiance of Nazi orders, by private people and Polish charity organizations, was aimed at improving the children's life, their protection both in moral and in educational aspects. The basic problem was to combat malnutrition, to secure clothing and education. As far as possible efforts were also made to bear in mind the rights of children and youths to full development.

Along with material aid and health care, an important role was played by assistance rendered in all other aspects of life. Socio-economic aims, related to the need to help a family in straitened circumstances or children whom war and occupation had deprive of their home, socio-educational aims which took into account the children's need for education and development, and a patriotic aim arising from regard for the nation's future, attended the saving and protection of children and youths against extermination on the part of the Nazi invaders and decided on the forms and the substance of work.[1]

In reviewing the above problems it should be remembered that the aims were common but the possibilities were different; different too were the ways in which struggle was waged in the General Government and in what were known as regions incorporated into the Reich where Poles were deprived of all rights to social welfare. In the General Government the occupation authorities at first retained certain benevolent institutions that had existed before the war but put a number of constraints upon them which made efficient help impossible. In the spring of 1941 the function of the former social welfare organizations was taken over by the Central Welfare Council (RGO), created in 1940, the only Polish welfare institution tolerated by the Nazi authorities. Care for children was within the official competence of this organization. In reality, the constraints deliberately imposed by the invader, in accordance with the assumptions of the genocidal war, substantially hampered efficient help or made it simply impossible.

From the first days of the occupation educational problems were the object of particular concern on the part of the Polish people. When the

occupational authorities liquidated the Polish school system in the regions incorporated into the Reich in 1940, secret teaching was the sole form of the struggle for education for children and youth.

In the General Government the primary schools which the Nazi authorities allowed to open, faced tremendous difficulties. Shortage of space, distance from the place of residence and overcrowding had a negative impact on attendance. The need to earn their livelihood often limited the children's time. Many of them were kept at home by hunger and lack of clothes. Lessons at school were held in several shifts because of the scarcity of rooms and those available were often unheated, without sanitary installations and school aids. Part of the school buildings were destroyed during the hostilities (out of the 28,882 primary school buildings that existed in the school year 1937/38, as many as 4,880, that is 17 per cent, were destroyed in 1939). Other buildings were taken over by the invaders for the needs of the army, the administration or for the exclusive use of German children. The occupation authorities allowed a total of 30 per cent of primary schools to open which were attended by only 30 per cent of the children who had been learning before the war.[2] So it was more than ever necessary to fight for the maintenance of existing Polish schools, and both the teacher, the pupil and the school needed social assistance.

Young people aged 14 and over could attend vocational schools in the General Government. Often the school identity card was protection against a round-up and deportation to forced labour in the Reich. Polish industrial, trade and service firms willingly declared their readiness to operate various types of vocational schools and courses. This provided a chance for lending assistance to young people.

Counteracting the invader's efforts to lower the intellectual level and striving for a patriotic education of Polish children and young people, teachers — actively supported by society — undertook secret teaching throughout the whole occupied Poland. It developed spontaneously, on the initiative of private individuals, and in certain areas it was coordinated by the Secret Teachers' Council (TON). All available opportunities were used. In Warsaw, for instance, an illegal organization of the headmasters of legally existing commercial schools was set up. It drew up a secret teaching programme that was included in the programme allowed by the Nazis for these type of schools. The Polish language was taught during lessons of correspondence, history in the framework of world geography, and mathematics during lessons of book keeping. The pupils were, of course, aware that all this was illegal and that not only the pupils faced danger.

Youngsters were exposed to constant round-ups. Struggle had to be waged against the deportation of girls and boys to forced labour in the Reich. Headmasters repeatedly secured by various means, including

ransom, the liberation of their pupils from the transit camp at Skaryszewska street in Warsaw. In March 1943 officials of the *Arbeitsamt* suddenly demanded the school registers of the Warsaw vocational schools with a view to establishing the addresses of pupils. This surprise move succeeded in only a few cases, in most schools the registers were hidden. Nevertheless the matter would have ended in the deportation of a large number of young people to forced labour, were it not for the immediate intervention of the Polish resistance movement. An attempt was made on the life of the head of the *Arbeitsamt* youth deparment in Kredytowa street, and the whole action was cancelled.

The Warsaw schools often did not confine themselves only to educational activity. School rooms and grounds were used to hold military training, to train nurses and liaison officers, to prepare food stocks, and even to organize arms stores and to distribute the underground press. Both pupils and teachers took part in the conspiratorial work, and all this took place under constant threat from the invader (unexpected inspections and searches). Many times arrests were made.

Schools in conspiracy, this was a phenomenon unprecedented in its dimensions, a form of struggle for the education of the young generation of Poles. This struggle was paid for with the death of 13,000 teachers in Nazi camps and mass executions, including 1,700 teachers from secondary schools, 1,000 from vocational schools, 120 from teachers' colleges, 700 from evening schools, and 416 professors, lecturers and research workers at schools of higher education. These losses amounted to between 14 and 18 per cent of the total number of teachers.[3]

The situation in the country, both in the economic and the social sphere, deteriorated in the course of time. The occupation system became consolidated. It was emphasized ever more distinctly that in the implementation of the Nazi plans against Poland, the problem of the extermination of youth and children was of particular importance. Thus the basic problem for Polish society, next to the struggle for a school for the child, was to save and to protect the child itself. In view of the threat to the Polish child, the social welfare concentrated its effort on the supply of food.

The diet of Polish children and young people was dependent on the ration ticket system introduced by the Nazi authorities. It must be borne in mind that it covered only part of the Polish population, namely the inhabitants of towns, and theoretically the rural landless population and small holders. The farmers not only had no provision for them in the ticket system but they were burdened with the duty to supply high quotas of agricultural produce which often exceeded the possibilities of their farms. The food the child obtained under the ration ticket system was insufficient in both qualitative and quantitative terms. The calorific value of the rations for Polish children amounted to one third of

the value of the rations for German children. Moreover, in practice the scarce food rations were far below the prescribed standards. In Warsaw, for example, in the middle of 1942 the value of the rations amounted to some 375 calories per 24 hours instead of the 640 provided for.[4] Sometimes not all the tickets for the products covered by the ration system were issued to the population. In general the food rations covered 15 per cent of the needs of children and young people for food. They faced the threat that their organisms would be exhausted and their development checked, as well as being exposed to various diseases, particularly tuberculosis. The campaign in favour of assistance to children and young people was becoming increasingly broader in scope. It was joined — apart from private persons — by the existing social institutions, such as the RGO, the Polish Red Cross (PCK) and even the Voluntary Fire Guards (OSP). The Polish Red Cross, revived in the General Government (except the district of Galicia), conducted social work through its regional and district representatives. It was not effective everywhere, because this activity was much restricted by the Nazis. Help to prisoners of the Majdanek camp and the inmates of the prison at Lublin Castle was given under the guidance of Dr Ludwik Christians, chairman of the Lublin section of the Polish Red Cross. Thanks to Dr Christians' strenuous efforts many persons were freed from Majdanek until the end of 1943. These were mainly children and sick persons who were placed in a hospital.

An enormous contribution to this difficult and noble fight for children's existence was made by the Social Welfare and Health Department of the Municipal Administration in Warsaw. The Municipal Administration — an executive organ, elected by the City Council — was part of what was called a self-governing administration in the pre-war period. After the capitulation of Warsaw the Municipal Administration continued its work under German supervision. Its opportunities to lend assistance to the Polish population were, therefore, limited. Nevertheless its workers, particularly those of the Social Welfare and Health Department saved many children. In daily contacts with parents, orphanages (for whose existence it fought), and with children, this Department developed a special work system. As many as 15 so-called Children's Information Bureaux operated in Warsaw under the direct management of the Administration. In many cases they were a continuation of the pre-war youth information bureau. In view of the invader's ban on any tutelary and educational activity with respect to young people, the bureaux changed their name. Their basic task was to be aware of the concrete needs of children and to use as a remedy any help, both spontaneous from the society, as well as organized assistance.

The bureaux's sphere of activity encompassed young people (they were cared for by the so-called vocational school guardians), children at

school age (school guardians) and the youngest children (kindergarten guardians). Particular attention was devoted to the latter in the concluding period of the occupation for Warsaw had many young children who were uncared for, often lonely orphans or semi-orphans whose parents had died, were in detention at camps or had been deported to forced labour in the Reich. These children were helpless, hungry, often without clothes. Some of them were placed in charity houses, others — mainly those whose parents were forced to stay away from home throughout the day — in kindergartens, organized despite tremendous difficulties. Among the charity houses to which the Municipal Administration gave constant subsidies and, in a way known only to itself, steadily built them up contrary to the Nazis instructions, was the Father Boduen House in Nowogrodzka street and its branch at Klarysew. On December 31, 1939, as many as 1,298 children stayed there, including children lost during the turmoil of war, found in railway stations, on barricades that remained after the September 1939 fighting, under the ruins of houses, etc. The children needed physical and psychic care, and the establishment ran into enormous difficulties: shortage of food, fuel and clothes. And here too were it not for help from society and the devotion and the stamina of the personnel of the house and of employees of the Municipal Administration many problems would not have been solved. The Father Boduen House, for example, received official food rations of the highest standard, to which only certain hospitals were entitled. They often remained on paper and no systematic provisions could be expected. Thus the provision of food for children practically was a continuing problem that was solved with great efforts by the personnel.

The Father Boduen House also had fine achievements in the saving of Jewish children. In the middle of 1943 it harboured more than 100 Jewish children who needed special care in view of their dreadful experience. For understandable reasons of security they stayed mainly at Klarysew, and were often hidden in various convents.[5]

The children's home at Bielany in Warsaw, called "Our Home" also participated actively in the saving of children of Jewish descent. Closely connected with this home was Janusz Korczak, an organizer of this establishment after the First World War.

Risking their own lives, Poles saved between 100,000 and 120,000 Polish Jews, including children. For lending assistance to Jews Poles faced the death penalty. In practice the Nazis usually murdered whole Polish families which lent this assistance, and burnt and destroyed villages which gave Jewish families a hiding place.

On inspiration from the Social Welfare and Health Department of the Municipal Administration in Warsaw a total of about 500 Jewish children were saved by various charity houses.

The work of the Municipal Administration and its Welfare Department was not confined only to what was called closed welfare. In Warsaw there operated ten health and social welfare centres, in the framework of what was known as open welfare. The official function of the centres was to grant a few benefits exclusively to working persons because the Nazi authorities did not allow aid to be given to the unemployed. In fact the centres served to finance club-rooms operated by the RGO whose aim was to give children the necessary food they lacked. These funds also were used to pay teachers, and to buy school aids.

In discussing the problem of the protection of children and young people against Nazi extermination in Warsaw we cannot fail to emphasize the great role that was played by the Warsaw Social Self-aid Committee (SKSS), though it existed only from September 5, 1939, to March 1941. Financed by the Municipal Administration, supported with gifts from Polish institutions, commercial firms and private persons, as well as with American gifts, the Committee provided food, clothes, lent medical assistance, and organized a shelter for refugees and victims of fires, large numbers of whom were encamped in Warsaw after the surrender. Children were taken under particular care.

To illustrate the dimension of the problem it is worth mentioning the fact that more than 200,000 persons including more than 50,000 children availed themselves of the benefits in various forms. A total of 26,000,000 meals were served to adults and 17,000,000 to children and young people.[6] The Committee and the people of Warsaw displayed an enormous commitment in mobilizing their forces and the means to save Polish children. It is worth noting in this place that this was not an easy task, particularly as the American gifts provided by the Polish Food Commission, an organization called into being by the American Red Cross, ceased to be sent in February 1941 on instructions from the occupation authorities. The Committee obtained fats, cod-liver oil, sugar, flour, condensed milk, dried vegetables, at first directly from the United States and then indirectly from Europe. Some 320,000 children, mainly in Warsaw and Cracow, received these gifts. The SKSS also comprised — as a section — the Warsaw Committee for Assistance to Children which had already operated in the inter-war period. Under the changed conditions of occupation the Committee started organizing assistance to children as early as October 1939, and at the same time it began to work out a structure of operations that would allow it to realize its aims under a semblance of legality. The Committee's activity covered all the quarters of Warsaw. Along with a network of local organizational links operating in individual quarters (SKSS districts), it had some 300 permanent and part-time agencies. These were boarding houses, open-air kindergartens, crèches and summer camps. It

also sent children to the countryside in summer time and kept a card-index of lost children.

So vast a scope of activity called for the cooperation of permanent workers and the voluntary contribution of many people whose names today, after over 35 years, are not always known, and who have a praiseworthy record in this sector of the fight against the invader. Together with more than 1,000 teachers, and a large number of members of the pre-war school centres, the Section of Care for Children and Youth rallied social activists, students who had to interrupt their learning because of the war and girl-scouts, members of the conspiratorial Girl-scout Organization. Many of them were killed by the Nazis.

The Nazi authorities interfered increasingly with the activity of the SKSS for it did not serve the interests of the Third Reich. The situation was already serious at the turn of 1939 and 1940, and the problem deepened in 1940 when the invader confiscated food stocks in December. On March 17, 1941, Ludwig Fischer, chief of the Warsaw district, instructed the Central Welfare Council (RGO), created in Warsaw in February 1940, to take over charity activity. Aside from other things the point was to concentrate activity in one organization with a view to facilitating control on the part of the invader. The RGO founded and maintained welfare establishments, canteens, kept hospices and hostels, provided additional food to children at schools, kept soup-kitchens, and lent assistance to the evicted. The food rations obtained from the authorities for the RGO committees to combat malnutrition did not suffice. Products were, therefore, bought illegally. Up to January 31, 1941, 390,575 children were encompassed by the RGO welfare activity, and additional food was handed out in 1,461 locations. Warsaw accounted for some 50 per cent of the whole aid.

According to calculations by the RGO, in March 1941 there were in the General Government about 800,000 children aged up to 15 who needed additional food. At least 450,000 of them were children of primary school age.

In the years 1941-42 the Nazi authorities restricted the food provisions for the RGO to the four winter months (December-March). In effect the number of meals served had to be curtailed. In Warsaw 118,800 meals were served daily in the first quarter of 1941, and only 46,100 meals daily in the first quarter of 1942 [7]. The calorific value of meals was also reduced. This was the effect of a number of decrees by the invader who intended to wipe out the Polish nation.

In June 1942 the RGO campaign of aid to children reached its climax for the children particularly needed better food after a long winter. Children received additional food in special places, day-nurseries, at schools and in children's kitchens.

District	Number of locations	Number of children who received additional food daily
Galicia	24	9,857
Cracow	629	45,719
Lublin	98	12,368
Radom	173	17,636
Warsaw	253	37,669
TOTAL	1,177	123,249

In the four districts (except Galicia) the number of places where additional food was given to children dropped from 1,157 to 1,153 while the number of children increased from 111,738 to 113,392. Of the total number of children who received additional food, 60.1 per cent were given meals in school kitchens. The remaining number comprises children who received additional food in special kitchens and in day-nurseries, as well as children of up to two years who received milk, or milk meals in special milk centres. Additional food in special locations and in the general soup-kitchens was served to 176,323 children at the end of the second quarter of the year including 16,331 children of pre-school age.[8]

Besides providing additional food, the committees began to organize summer camps and semi-camps. When at the end of June this campaign was in full swing, the Nazi authorities introduced a number of restrictions. For example, at an NSDAP party congress in Cracow in June 1942 the fact that Polish children received aid in food and that summer camps were organized for them was noted with indignation and demands were made to prohibit such action. In effect the food rations were cancelled and on July 15, 1942, all summer camps and semi-camps were liquidated in the General Government, including camps run by the Cracow branch of the RGO in Zaryte and Rabka, summer camp for Warsaw children in Rokiciny, and 25 other centres in the General Government.

Renewed efforts to obtain agreement from the Nazi authorities to organize summer camps and semi-camps were rewarded with partial success. On May 25, 1943, the Population and Social Welfare Department of the General Government gave its consent with the reservation that it was also necessary to secure agreement from the appropriate district chief. The authorities also enjoined to provide this type of assistance principally to children of persons deported to forced labour in Germany and of those employed in projects that had military importance; but they refused to ensure any food rations. The organization of summer rest for children was of utmost importance. This task was

undertaken by the tutelary committees, though the purchase of food on the free market was beyond their financial possibilities. The number of children that were to be sent to summer camps was then estimated at some 75,000, and the number of children who needed additional food and clothes (in the middle of 1943) at 525,000.

An exceptionally cruel blow was dealt by an order issued to district chiefs, to halt the provision of additional food to children. This authorized the local authorities to close the places where additional food was provided to children, day-nurseries and kindergartens, and the activists of tutelary committees were threatened with arrest if they disregarded the instruction. The RGO's food stock, kept secured thanks to donations from society for children and young people, were to be destined, according to official orders, for adults who worked for the military needs of the Third Reich (a letter of the Population and Social Welfare Department of the General Government of October 28, 1942).[9] In connection with the above instructions by the occupying authorities tremendous sacrifices on the part of Polish society were necessary to save children from starvation. Children were given additional food illegally, at great risk, in what were called soup-kitchens for adults, and activity was centred on the provision of additional food at schools.

At the end of 1942 the number of children encompassed by welfare activity stood at:

Galicia district	29,543
Cracow district	91,664
Radom district	44,857
Lublin district	72,474
Warsaw district	119,236

A total of 357,774, an insignificant proportion of the children who needed this care.

On January 6, 1943, the provision of additional food to children at schools was banned. The food aid to children, organized thanks to the enormous efforts of society, broke down. The combating of malnutrition continued only in private homes. At the same time the authorities began to liquidate the children's homes and sanatoria operated by the RGO. The establishments for children suffering from tuberculosis at Rabka and Zakopane were closed. Only by strenuous efforts was it possible to preserve a Children's Home at Rymanów where some 100 patients at a time could be treated. Meanwhile, because of starvation children lost their physical resistance and, consequently, became more prone to illness. As many as 80 per cent of children were already affected by anaemia. Tuberculosis spread in a terrifying way. Typhoid epidemics broke out. Mortality increased dramatically and the natural increase did not compensate for the losses.

The effects of widespread hunger were intensified by the shortage of clothes. The pre-war stocks were gradually depleted and Polish people did not receive rations for the purchase of clothes and linen. Within the framework of American aid in the years 1940-41 the Polish population received 36,958 items of girls' clothing and underwear, 43,493 items of boys' clothing, 90,654 items for young children and 8,394 for babies. This was distributed among more than 100,000 children. In the first year of occupation the population unaffected by expulsion campaigns gave great deal in aid. In the course of time the stocks depleted, however. Thousands of children in town and countryside, having nothing to put on, did not leave their dwellings, which were unheated, in winter.

Particularly hard were the conditions of children of homeless families. The conditions in rallying camps — lack of sanitary installations, hunger, epidemics — decimated the children who stayed there. Transports often were sent in a period of severe frost in goods waggons. The precentage of children who died was enormous. During halts Polish Red Cross activists, local population and everybody who had any opportunity to reach the expellees, tried to help, mainly the children. This was not easy. The handing of a chunk of bread often led to arrest or beating.

In November 1941 the Germans began to expel people from the Zamość region. The campaign was most intense towards the end of 1942 and in the spring of 1943. The expellees, along with their children, were carried by carts, by railway or were driven on foot and placed in resettlement camps at Zamość and Zwierzyniec. Children were separated from their parents and put in the worst huts without straw and wooden bunks. Their situation in resettlement camps and after they left the camps was tragic. Hunger, cold, infectious diseases and lack of care caused a very high mortality rate, particularly among the youngest. The children who were freed from the Zwierzyniec and Zamość camps as a result of efforts made by the Polish Red Cross, were wholly emaciated and ill. They had, therefore, to be placed at once in a hospital, had to be given food, clothes and cared for. Only immediate help from society could keep them alive.

Food, and especially medicine, were supplied to the camps. The provision of food was hampered by the camp authorities. The whole population of the Lublin region took part in the collection of food, clothes, underwear and medicines. As a consequence of many efforts made by the RGO and thanks to an intervention by the chairman of the Polish Welfare Committee, 300 children, from eighteen months to 12 years of age, were freed from the Zwierzyniec camp in July 1943. The destinies of those who stayed on depended on the group into which they were classified. Part of the children and young people were considered

to lend themselves to Germanization and were deported to the Reich; others, mainly aged above 14, were sent to work, principally in the armaments industry. The youngest were sent by railway, during heavy frost in unheated waggons, without food and appropriate clothes, to various counties including Garwolin, Łuków, Mińsk Mazowiecki and Siedlce. Many children died from starvation, cold, infectious diseases and emaciation. The children expelled from the Zamość region who survived were taken care of by the local population and inhabitants of Warsaw who gave them a dwelling, food, clothes, and medical assistance. In January 1943 the news spread in Warsaw that children from the Zamość region, closed in waggons, were at railway stations. Crowds of people, particularly women, started searching. The Polish underground then distributed an appeal part of which read:

> We call upon people living near railway tracks and stations to watch attentively and to find out the spots where children are kept. When waggons are detected, efforts should be made to take children out of them as soon as possible[10].

No transports arrived, however, and at the time when the population of Warsaw warmly demonstrated their willingness to help Polish children from the Zamość region, various townships near Warsaw were the scene of the tragedy of these children. A transport composed of 900 people, 80 per cent of them children aged six months to 12 years, arrived at Stoczek. Children were also dispatched to Żelechów, Kałuszyn, Cegłowo, Parysew and Mrozy. A transport of 605 people, including 275 children, arrived at Pilawa on December 10, 1942. On December 11 1942, 634 people, including 283 children, arrived at Sobolew (their destination was Lelechów). On December 18, 974 people including 512 children arrived at Sobolew (their destination was Maciejówek, Łaskarzew, Stoczek and Żelechów).[11]

The Warsaw Municipal Administration which had precise information on the children's conditions, was aware that the great generosity of people and their freely given help would not suffice to save the children. The material possibilities of the Polish population during the Nazi occupation were extremely limited. Jan Starczewski, Director of the Municipal Administration's Social Welfare Department, approached Dr Wilhelm Hagen, a German doctor who officially supervised the health service in the city, and obtained his consent to go to the localities where the children stayed in order to establish what assistance was necessary. As a result, Jan Starczewski was arrested immediately on his return and sent to Auschwitz. Dr Hagen, who sent Hitler a letter that illustrated the conditions of Polish expellees, was relieved of his post and detailed to military service on the eastern front. Children from the Zamość region were taken care by among others the Workers' Social Self-aid Commission of municipal workers in Warsaw; "Społem" and

other Polish institutions provided children with clothing, underwear, food and money.

Many Zamość children found shelter among Polish families. A campaign aimed at securing foster families was conducted — many children were orphans — and in addition there was a little room in club-rooms, charity houses and what were called children's "nests" organized for the Zamość children. In April 1943 the Siedlce county where two "nests" and tow club-rooms were planned, had only one club-room, and the Garwolin county one "nest" and one club-room.

Krystyna Lichaczewska, Marian Rapacki, Maria Fandri, Leon Marszałek, Jan Starczewski, Dr Mikołaj Łącki, Jan Wolf, headmaster at Mrozy and many living and dead persons whom it is impossible to name here, generously fulfilled their citizen's duty saving Zamość children from extermination.

Children from the Zamość region were also sent to concentration camps, induding Majdanek. Dr Ludwik Christians, chairman of the Lublin section of the Polish Red Cross, who untiringly tried to help prisoners, was allowed to take from the Majdanek camp, 3,514 persons of whom 388 children were placed in hospitals in Lublin (by the middle of 1944 some 70 children had died).[12]

Polish youth was also affected by mass deportations to the Reich. In the *Warthegau* the labour offices registered the Polish population in the first months of occupation. Enrolment to work, was, therefore, based on a personal summons sent to an individual. On the other hand, in the General Government deportations to the Reich were effected mainly by round-ups. Young people tried to avoid deportation to the Reich and both Polish institutions and private persons lent them assistance in this respect. For instance, fictitious labour documents or cards certifying attendance at vocational courses were issued. The Nazi attack against the Polish child was launched from all sides. The constant help of Polish society in the saving of children and young people was also given by all available means.

Care for the children of prisoners was one more form of the protection of Polish children against extermination in the period of Nazi occupation. Polish families took care of lonely children whose parents were imprisoned in the various types of camps. The main help was lent by the Patronage of Care for Prisoners which operated on the basis of material aid from the RGO. The section of care for prisoners' children was only partially legal. The aid in great measure encompassed outlawed children. This had to be, therefore, conspiratorial activity. Zofia Zbyszewska, a Patronage leader, writes:

> The imprisoned asked in messages smuggled from prisons about the circumstances of their relatives. Families everywhere solicited help. Often we had to take care of children whose parents had been imprisoned, executed, or who had

been forced to go into hiding. Consequently, this was no educational work. This was life-saving [13].

Efforts were made to place children in boarding houses, children's homes, and substitute families. It was not easy because these sorts of institutions became fewer in number as the occupying authorities systematically closed them. Many Catholic religious orders took an active part in this campaign.

Lonely children from Warsaw whose parents had been imprisoned or executed, were often sent to remote villages through the intermediary of the Patronage. Sometimes the aim was to secure proper healthy conditions, sometimes to ensure security. Zofia Zbyszewska estimates that during five years of occupation the Patronage lent assistance to about 5,000 children who remained without care as a result of the Nazi policy of extermination.

The protection of Polish children and young people in the difficult conditions of occupation called for many deprivations and sacrifices. Along with material aid and health care — contrary to the rigorous prohibitions of the invader, social, cultural and educational activity was conducted. Charity institutions, a number of Polish firms and institutions, teachers and social workers as well as the whole Polish society took part in this work. Many of the youngest owe their lives to known and unknown heroes of this struggle.

NOTES

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[2] *Polskie szkolnictwo powszechne w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej.* A compilation by the Central Statistical Office, Warszawa 1969, p. 8.

[3] C. Pilichowski, *Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na dzieciach i młodzieży polskiej*, op. cit., pp. 40—41.

[4] KC PZPR archives, sygn. 202/I, vol. 34, *Memoriał o sytuacji dzieci w Polsce*, p. 6.

[5] A. Słomczyński, *Dom ks. Boduena 1939-1945*, Warszawa 1975.

[6] *W obronie dzieci i młodzieży w Warszawie, 1939-1944.* edited by S. Tazbir, Warszawa 1975, p. 16.

[7] Archiwum Akt Nowych, Zespół Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, Wydział I Ogólny, sygn. 114.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Żywia, an underground paper of the Peasant Women's Union, January 1943; Jak "Społem" ratowało dzieci Zamojszczyzny, Warszawa 1963.

[11] J. Wnuk, op. cit., p. 191.

[12] L. Christians, "Piekło XX wieku, Zbrodnia, hart ducha i miłosierdzie", Rodzina Polska, 1946, no. 1.

[13] Z. Zbyszewska, *Opieka nad dziećmi więźniów, Obrona dzieci i młodzieży Warszawy*, op. cit., pp. 420—435.

6

The Effects of War and Nazi Occupation on the Children's Psychic Life

The Second World War and its consequences represent a broad interdisciplinary research problem. It has also been undertaken by doctors, as the consequences of the Second World War revealed themselves in the physical condition, the psychic life and the moral attitude of Polish children and youths.

Professor Stefan Baley, a Polish psychologist who conducted investigations among children and youths after the war, thus wrote:

> A little girl who entered the Auschwitz camp as a three-year-old child and who is on our files, has caused trouble in her environment by her oligophrasia [1].

Nelly Wolffbeim, a specialist in child psychiatry in London, examined some 3,000 children who had passed through Nazi concentration camps. After the war they were placed in special establishments and clinics to enable them to recover their psychic and moral equilibrium. These children had a distrustful attitude towards their new environment. Emotional indifference was widespread.

A journalist who had met these children, wrote later:

> Many of them had an aggressive attitude, were marked by a sadistic fantasy, defended their, often modest, property — some old playthings — as if their lives were at stake. Everything dear to them had been wrested from them for too long. They described as dead their fellows who suddenly had to leave the room. This proved how deeply they had been affected. The new world was — at least this was how it seemed to them — dangerous and overpowering. They lacked a sense of security and confidence [2].

Today, though many years have gone by since the end of the Second World War, the problems of diseases resulting from time spent in Nazi concentration camps and their consequences, are still with us.

The effects of internment in concentration camps manifested themselves in a progressive asthenia, in damages to the organs and the tissues of the body and in disturbances in their functioning. The immunity of the organism decreased, the incidence of tuberculosis rose and a premature ageing followed. This was an effect of injuries, long-

standing malnutrition, overwork, the lack of appropriate clothes to protect against cold, hard conditions, nervous strain, fear, pain, and constant psychical stress. The loss of one's family home was a great shock.

Among the former inmates of the camp at Przemysłowa street in Łódź who were imprisoned as children, 36 per cent of those examined have incomplete primary education, 38.7 per cent primary and incomplete secondary education, 18.6 per cent secondary education and 6.7 per cent higher education. Examinations of people who passed through Nazi concentration camps indicate that 14.3 per cent of women and 11.4 per cent of men have incomplete primary education. Flogging often combined with brain injuries during childhood substantially delayed their intellectual development. As many as 50 per cent of men — former prisoners of the Łódź camp — and 56.7 per cent of women now have manual work.[3]

The experience of children who passed through Nazi camps, goes beyond the limits of average human endurance. It left lasting traces which are found in an increased proneness to diseases and a considerable limitation of the ability to work.

The former inmates of the Łódź camps suffer mainly from chronic diseases, related to their stay in the camp. Fifty per cent of those examined have changes within their vertebral column caused by injuries suffered during interrogations, by beating or hard manual work or overwork. In addition, they often suffer from alimentary canal diseases, bone and mobile organ diseases, psycho-neurotic disturbances, diseases of the circulation and respiration systems, and other injuries. The examinations of the youngest Auschwitz prisoners and children born in that camp, undertaken by doctors from the Psychiatric Clinic of the Cracow Medical Academy, were also aimed at establishing what the effects were on the children's personality, their psyche, after staying in the camp in the first months or the first years of their life. The children under examination were aged not more than eight years at the time of liberation. The basic problem was to establish whether the fact of the children's stay in the camp had a decisive influence on their further development and to what extent it influenced their futures. In the course of the examinations no case of a psychic disease was diagnosed but only personality features that were classified as neurotic. Former prisoners complain of headache, irritability, impulsiveness, disturbance of their sleep rhythm, fear, a sense of weakness, heart, stomach, and joint pain, and a bad frame of mind.[4]

The youngest children do not remember much of what happened at the camp. They have a misty reminiscence of their entry into the camp, "there was a long brigde", "there were many of us and we were waiting".

After liberation the Auschwitz children found adoptive parents. An adoptive mother of a child who is already grown-up today, said: "Well, perhaps I spoiled it and was too indulgent to it but I always bore in mind that that child had felt no mother's hand and that it had lacked bread."

The Polish children's psyche was influenced not only by their internment in camps but also by the horror of events during the occupation. Children saw, with their own eyes, people being arrested, rounded-up, beaten, and murdered. They often saw the death of their dearest ones, not always understanding what was happening. Among those replying to a questionnaire in Warsaw in the first post-war years, concerning the experience of children in the years of the occupation, 25 per cent witnessed public executions, 18 per cent forced evacuation and 10 per cent other forms of atrocity.[5]

A substantial percentage of Polish children had no home during the war and their material situation forced them to earn a living. These facts had to have an impact on their adult life.

NOTES

[1] S. Baley, "Psychiczne wpływy drugiej wojny światowej". Psychologia Wychowawcza, 1948, No. 1—2, vol. XIII, p. 13.

[2] S. Startk, ,Wie sich KZ-Kinder behaupten. Gefährliche Verdrängungen schrecklicher Erlebnisse werden beobachtet, Frankfurter Rundschau, July 6, 1950.

[3] C. Kempisty, *Sprawy Norymbergi ciąg dalszy. Wyniki badań socjomedycznych osób, które w dzieciństwie więzione były w hitlerowskich obozach koncentracyjnych*, Warszawa 1975.

[4] W. Półtawska. "Z badań nad obozem oświęcimskim". Przegląd lekarski No. 1, 1965, p. 23.

[5] A Questionnaire of the Institute of Psychical Hygiene in Warsaw, June 1945; H. Radomska-Strzemecka, *Okupacja w oczach młodzieży*, op. cit.

7

The Nazi Apparatus of Crime

The plans of the Nazi programmes for crimes on children found a reflection in a complex of legal acts, official and secret instructions which were made by the authorities of both the state and the party administrations.

1. THE GERMAN NATIONAL SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY (NSDAP)

The role of the NSDAP, the party that was created in 1919, lay, in the period when it exercised absolute power in the Third Reich, in the growth of an enormous police apparatus, a camp system, the establishment of total surveillance, the subjecting of all spheres of life to strict control and regulation, in the introduction of the principle of leadership, the carrying out of detailed programmes of conquest and extermination of European countries, including principally the Polish population. The political leadership of the NSDAP was recognized as a criminal organization by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg.

The NSDAP Racial Political Office (*Rassenpolitisches Amt*), created by a decree of November 17, 1933, soon after Hitler acceded to power, turned into a hotbed of short-term and long-term plans whose subject were also crimes on Polish children. Its scope of activity comprised training, propaganda, and cooperation in the sphere of legislation related to demographic and racial policies. After the war broke out there arose a controversy between this office and the SS Race and Settlement Head Office as to whether the former should be allowed to conduct practial "racial" examinations. This dispute was settled by Heinrich Himmler's decision of June 3, 1940, in such a way that only the Himmlerite apparatus of the RuSHA was allowed to conduct practical "racial" examinations. This decision was also influenced by the fact that "only a few SS members were employed" in the NSDAP organ, and this could cause a distortion of Himmler's political line. He apparently had no confidence in the scientists from the NSDAP Racial Political Office who — perhaps from circumspection — were not too eager to join

the ranks of the SS. Himmler also wanted perhaps to eliminate the influence of scientists in matters in which he himself had not the pseudo-scientific grounding but in which he wanted to decide personally — as is later confirmed by facts — and pass for an authority. Nevertheless the role of the Racial Political Office which dealt with the elaboration of the theoretical foundations for criminal activity by the SS authorities and organs, continued to be very important.

As well as the office mentioned above, there still existed the NSDAP Nationality Office (*Hauptamt für Volkstumspolitik*) which actively implemented the nationality policy in what were called territories incorporated into the Reich, through its organs in individual districts (*Gauamt für Volkstumspolitik*).

Neither can we leave out the activities of the NSDAP Health Office (*Amt für Volksgesundheit*) with its territorial organs in the districts (*Gauamt für Volksgesundheit*) and the NSDAP Training Office (*Schulungsamt*) with its territorial organs (*Gauschulungsamt*).

The health service not only took part in various criminal actions but developed its own schemes. Gauleiter Arthur Greiser's plan (to murder about 230,000 Poles ill with tuberculosis) was opposed by Dr Kur Blome, deputy head of the NSDAP Health Office, who submitted his own plan, based not on humanitarian grounds but taking into account "political, psychological, and material problems". He expressed the view that it would be impossible to keep secret such a mass campaign. The political situation and the realities of war did not allow the realization of a planned extermination of sick people among whom children, exhausted by war and hunger, represented a substantial percentage.

In the Upper Silesian Province, Dr Klause, head of the NSDAP Health Office, was co-responsible for the disastrous health and sanitary conditions in what were called *Polenlager*, where the number of people under age, including babies, sometimes even exceeded 40 per cent of the total number of prisoners.

The Poznań NSDAP Training Office issued detailed instructions on what attitude was to be taken to Poles, urging hostility and a sense of superiority over them. These guidelines also applied to children.

2. THE NSDAP ELITE GUARDS (SS)

A particularly atrocious and ruthless role in the crimes against Polish children was played by the terror organization of the NSDAP Elite Guards, in short known as SS (*Schutzstaffeln*). It was set up in 1923 as Hitler's bodyguards, and three years later it was subordinated to the NSDAP Storm Troops (SA — *Sturmabteilung*), the paramilitary organi-

zation whose commander was the ambitious Captain Ernst Röhm. From 1929 the SS was led by Himmler who conferred upon the Elite Guards the character of an inner-party police and a political intelligence service (SD — *Sicherheitsdienst*). At that time the SS numbered barely 280 members. In 1934 however the SS played the main role in the liquidation of the SA leadership, headed by Ernst Röhm, who was an opponent of Himmler's within the party. This action was called the "night of the long knives". After these events the SS became an independent "member organization" of the NSDAP. Himmler made patient and systematic efforts to make of the SS an "aristocracy" within the. Nazi party, basing the selection of SS members on the doctrine of "race and blood". When the Nazi party assumed power in 1933 the self-styled "racial elite" already umbered 52,000 members. In 1936 Himmler was appointed chief of the German police which consisted of the general police, criminal police, Gestapo, and also the security service (SD). Parallel to this development of the SS organization whose task was to "protect the Reich's integral security", its influence constantly increased in that senior state officials and other personalities in public life were conferred the highest ranks in the SS. To preserve good relations with the party elite and to maintain advantageous economic positions, industrialists, bankers and merchants made substantial financial contributions to the SS. This tribute was, however, profitable in every respect. By means of such infiltration the Elite Guards achieved influence in all spheres of life in Germany. In 1939 the SS organization (*Allgemeine SS*) had 240,000 members.

In addition to the general SS organization mentioned above, there were two further groups: "reserve troops" (*SS-Verfügungstruppen*) composed of volunteers who had done four-years service in the SS — instead of in the army — and the death's head detachments (*SS-Totenkopfverbände*), selected from among volunteers and used for the supervision of concentration camps. The latter numbered about 40,000 men in 1939.

These two formations took part in the campaign against Poland, and in 1940 they numbered about 100,000 men and were known collectively as the *Waffen-SS*.

In the last years of the war the SS represented the strongest element of power, almost wholly independent of the Wehrmacht and the general administration. In 1944 the *Waffen-SS* numbered some 950,000 people while the membership of what was called *Allgemeine SS* dropped to 200,000.

The whole SS organization was subordinated to *Reichsführer SS* Heinrich Himmler, and the SS Reich Command (*Reichsführung SS Command*). The latter included 12 head offices (*Hauptämter*). Criminal activity against the Polish population fell within the competence of these

five offices, namely the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA), the Head Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom (*Stabshauptamt* RKFDV), the SS Race and Settlement Head Office (RuSHA), the SS Economic and Administrative Head Office (WVHA), and the Central Resettlement Body for Ethnic Germans, also known as the German National Mediation Office (VoMi).

3. THE REICH MAIN SECURITY OFFICE (RSHA)

This office was the central authority of the Third Reich's security police (Sipo) and the political intelligence service both of the state and the NSDAP. From 1933 it was called Security Service of the *Reichsführer SS* (SD). It was created in 1939 as a result of the merger of the Main Office of the Security Service (SD) with the Main Office of the Security Police (Sipo) which from 1936 had supervised the political police, the Gestapo, and the criminal police, the Kripo. According to the provisions of the decree of June 23, 1938, the whole personnel of these two organizational units, that is Gestapo and Kripo, had to belong to the SS. This meant that the state organization which the Gestapo and Kripo were, was in fact controlled by the SD, that is by a party organization.

At a later period the RSHA had seven departments plus department N (*Nachrichten*), the technical communications service. Departments I and II dealt with personal and administrative problems, department III with internal intelligence, department IV was the Gestapo, department V the Kripo, department VI dealt with foreign intelligence. Department VII was engaged in scientific research, principally in the sphere of rocket and nuclear weapons.

The RSHA, which supervised the above criminal organizations, at the same time was responsible for their genocidal actions. The heads of the RSHA, Reinhard Heydrich, and later Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Himmler's closest collaborator, organized the extermination of the population of conquered countries and set up a system of terror in the territory occupied.

The RSHA had a large share in the crimes against Polish children, particularly in pacification campaigns, executions, arrests, and expulsions.

4. THE **GEHEIME STAATSPOLIZEI** (GESTAPO)

The State Secret Police — which formed Department IV of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) from 1939 — continually carried out a policy of extermination and terror against the Polish population. Closely

linked personally and organizationally with the SS, it aroused general horror with its atrocious methods. The Gestapo was the main executive organ in such operations as the "extraordinary evacuation campaign", the "AB" campaign (*Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion*), aimed at the extermination of Polish leaders and intelligentsia, and in the putting into effect of the provisions of the 1942 decree entitled "Night and Fog" (*Nacht und Nebel*), the aim of which was that all those suspected of participation in the resistance movement who were not to be liquidated at once, were to be secretly deported to Germany, and no news about them was allowed to reach their families, even in the case of their death.

The Gestapo took direct and active part in various types of evacuation schemes and executions during which women and children were also killed. The Gestapo decided whether a child's life would be spared or not.

A substantial role was played by the Gestapo in the sphere of Germanization. This is indicated for example by Himmler's decree of February 16, 1942, on the treatment of people inscribed onto the German national list, group IV, which allowed the Gestapo to arrest "particularly burdened" parents and then take care of their children to guarantee them a German education.

When the so-called *Goralenvolk* was created in the area of the Nowy Targ county and several communes of the Myślenice county, which was aimed at breaking national unity through the propagation of the uplanders' separatism, meetings of activists of the "Uplanders' Committee" were always attended by the Gestapo which wanted to force people to apply for identity cards.

In his book *The Gestapo, an Instrument of Tyranny*, /. Crankshaw[1], a well-known British writer, expressed the view that there was no doubt that the Gestapo stood behind the most repulsive acts committed by the Germans all over Europe and inspired and organized these acts.

The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg declared the Gestapo to be a criminal organization.

5. THE HEAD OFFICE OF THE REICH COMMISSIONER FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF GERMAN FOLKDOM (RKFDV)

The office of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom (RKFDV) was called into being by Hitler's decree of October 7, 1939, and entrusted to Himmler who thus attained enormous power with respect to the designation of settlement areas in the occupied

territories and to the development of the ethnic and the demographic map of Europe. Up to mid-1941 SS and police commanders in Gdańsk and Cracow were plenipotentiaries for the strengthening of German folkdom, and these functions were performed on behalf of the governors by the senior SS and police commanders in Poznań, Katowice and Królewiec. To become independent of the general administration, Himmler created his own organization in Berlin by creating a Head Office whose tasks included the whole expulsion and resettlement campaign. This office set up on June 11, 1941, was headed by *SS-Gruppenführer* Ulrich Greifelt, who at the eighth Nuremberg trial was sentenced to 20 years in prison. The Head Office was divided into three "office grups": *Amtsgruppen* — A, B, C, and each of them was divided into more departments and sections. Group C and office VI were led by the war criminal SS General Konrad Meyer-Hetling. Problems of deportation and resettlement as well as the *Generalplan Ost* were worked out there. The staff section for Poznań and the *Warthegau* was headed by *SS-Standartenführer* Herbert Hübner, one of the accused and also sentenced at the eighth Nuremberg trial.

The Head Office of the RKFDV discharged important functions with respect to the Germanization of Polish children, principally as an organizational centre. The activity of this office included almost all the milieux and groups of children. Among the fundamental legal acts was Ulrich Greifelt's decree No. 67/I of February 19, 1942, on the Germanization of children who stayed with Polish foster families and in children's homes.

At the eighth Nuremberg trial the Head Office of the RKFDV was recognized as a criminal organization and was convicted of implementing the plan to abduct children of other nationalities with a view to Germanizing them, of expelling people, of causing many deaths principally among children and of forcing Poles under age to enrol in the German armed forces, independently of a number of other crimes against humanity.

6. THE RACE AND SETTLEMENT HEAD OFFICE (RuSHA)

This office was one of the oldest main offices of the SS supreme command. Before the war the basic task of RuSHA was to put into effect the theory of racism and to conduct investigations to verify the "Aryan" origin of candidates who applied for membership to the SS organization. An SS official was required to prove his "Nordic", or at least "Aryan" descent back to 1750. The RuSHA also considered SS-men's applications for consent to contract a marriage, which could not take place until their choice of match was approved. Such acceptance

was based on the principle of "racial purity". All of this formed part of Himmler's intentions to make a "racial elite" of the SS.

The experience of RuSHA in the sphere of racial policy made this office suitable for dealing with these problems in the implementation of the plans of genocide and in the Germanization of occupied peoples.

These new tasks of RuSHA pushed its former functions — particularly racial selection and care for SS-men — into the background. In the expanded scope of activity, based on theories that were deprived of any scientific value, a leading role was performed by the RuSHA Race Office, headed by Professor Bruno, Kurt Schultz and Walther Dongus.

From 1940 to April 1943 RuSHA was headed by *SS-Obergruppenführer* Otto Hoffmann. He was succeeded by *SS-Gruppenführer* Richard Hildebrandt. *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Fritz Schwalm was appointed in 1941 to be head of the RuSHA branch in Łódź. All of them were in the dock as war criminals in Case VIII in Nuremberg.

The Łódź branch office conducted the "racial investigations" connected with Germanization and settlement campaigns.

Commanders for race and settlement affairs who represented the RuSHA were attachted to all higher SS and police commanders in individual districts.

The search for "racially valuable" Poles was conducted by the RuSHA from the spring of 1940, and Polish children were the object of their particular interest. The decree of September 17, 1942, on the Germanization of the names of Polish children, with a view to slurring the traces of their origin, was one of the RUSHA's most significant legal acts.

7. THE GERMAN NATIONAL MEDIATION OFFICE (VoMi)

This office, called *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VoMi), was created long before the war broke out, and its task was to maintain ties between Germans who lived in foreign states and the Reich. Rudolf Höss, the deputy leader of the NSDAP, entrusted the management of VoMi to Werner Lorenz, later an *SS-Obergruppenführer,* who at the same time was subordinated to Joachim Ribbentrop, the Reich's minister of foreign affairs. As it turned out later, after the war broke out, the task of VoMi in "maintaining ties" with Germans abroad were also related to German espionage activity.

Shortly after the office of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom (RKFDV) was called into being by Hiltler's

decree of October 7, 1939, Himmler ordered Werner Lorenz, the head of VoMi, to register and to evacuate ethnic Germans from their present abodes to the Reich or to what were called lands incorporated into the Reich.

The resettlement in the east began shortly after the end of hostilities in Poland. On June 11, 1941. that is eleven days before the Nazi attack against the Soviet Union, the VoMi department that dealt with the repatriation of Germans, was transformed into the SS Main Office for the Repatriation of Ethnic Germans. It appears from the comparison of these dates that even at that time plans were made for a mass resettlement of ethnic Germans from the eastern areas. Afterwards the role and the competence of VoMi increased considerably. The so-called Office VI *(Amt VI)* was set up within VoMi. The management of this office was entrusted to *SS-Sturmbannführer* Heinz Brückner who made frequent official trips across Soviet territory.

The scope of competence of VoMi included: evacuation of ethnic Germans from their native countries, placing them and caring for them in resettlement sites, temporary employment, ideological training and further indoctrination after final employment or settlement. VoMi obtained a substantial amount of movable and fixed property confiscated from persons imprisoned in concentration camps or expelled. This property was then allotted to German settlers.

The cooperation of VoMi in East European territories with the *Einsatzgruppen*, one of the most criminal Nazi institutions, was established at the eighth Nuremberg trial.

VoMi had under its administration, all over the Reich, some 1,500 to 1,800 camps in which hundreds of thousands of men, women and children lived in very hard conditions. VoMi organized at least 22 camps in Silesia, called *Polenlager*. They were created exclusively for the Polish population. In the Upper Silesian Province, along with the VoMi Operative Command at Katowice (*Einsatzführung Oberschlesien*), there also existed — as far as can be established — further territorial units, and in particular: the County Commands over Camps at Racibórz, Katowice and Chorzów, and the County Settlement Staff Office at Bielsko.

The Zamość section of the Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom which carried out mass expulsions, also contained a VoMi unit. In the General Government, the registration of "persons of German descent" (*Deutschstammige*), started in 1942 and was preceded by an intensive search by VoMi for descendants of old German settlers who had become Polonized but in racial, hereditary and biological respects were considered valuable. The Nazis had here principally children in mind.

VoMi performed a leading role in the compulsory enrolment of citizens of foreign states into German military units and directly co-

operated in the compulsory Germanization of the population, in the arrests for slave labour, and in the abduction of children. In this respect the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* had not only organizational but also personal links with such SS institutions as the Head Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom (RKFDV), the Race and Settlement Head Office (RuSHA), and *Lebensborn e.V.*

In a verdict of the American Tribunal of March 10, 1948, it was recognized that — in light of the provisions of the Control Council's law no. 10 — the VoMi institution was a criminal organization which had committed war crimes and crimes against humanity.

8. THE ECONOMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE HEAD OFFICE (WVHA)

At the outbreak of the war, the concentration camps were attached to the Office of the Inspector of Concentration Camps. Heinrich Himmler, the chief of German police, considered them as one of the most important political instruments and in March 1942 he subordinated the concentration camps to the SS Economic and Administrative Head Office (WVHA). This office ran the concentration camps with a network of sub-camps and the factories connected with them, quarries mines, farms ad other industrial enterprises operated for the SS.

The WVHA central body was greatly expanded and was divided into five departments, the first three of which dealt exclusively with economic and administrative problems, such as management of buildings, barracks for the SS, supplies, provision of uniforms for SS units, and construction and equipping of camps.

The fourth department directly supervised the concentration camps, and the fifth department managed industrial enterprises in which camp inmates were employed.

The WVHA was headed by Oswald Pohl who had the rank of an SS general. Along with 17 other leading members of this institution he was put on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity before an American Tribunal at Nuremberg (Case IV). The Tribunal which tried Pohl had an easier task because it could make use of most of the documents submitted as evidence to the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg which had also investigated in detail the activity of WVHA as an SS organization.

The camps supervised by the WVHA became the place of extermination of an enormous number of Polish children and children of other nationalities.

9. THE SECURITY POLICE ACTION GROUPS **(EINSATZGRUPPEN)**

Prior to the act of aggression against Poland an agreement was reached between the chief of the security police and the high command

Children at Arms

Children were fighting in all underground organizations that came into existence in occupied Polish territories

Partisans of the Peasant Battalions from the Biłgoraj district

Boys of the "Ośka" detachment of the Peasant Battalions during drill

During the Warsaw uprising in 1944 children fought alongside adults

They performed many civilian and military functions

They acted as liaison officers between the frontline and the command

They distributed the insurgent press

They helped put out the fires kindled by German shells and bombs

They did their duty at least as well as the adults

Girls as insurgent liaison officers

Operating a heavy machine-gun

Last tribute to their commander

of the ground forces. It led to the creation of five action groups of the security police *(Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei).* These groups were attached to the five armies fighting in the East, one group to each army. After the front moved deep into Poland the security police created *Einsatzgruppe VI* which operated in the Poznań region while *Einsatzgruppe* z.b. V. "for special tasks" operated mainly in Upper Silesia and in the Dąbrowa Basin.

The action groups mentioned above numbered about 2,700 men and command over them was in the hands of Reinhard Heydrich, head of the RSHA. The participation of these groups in the campaign against Poland was given the code name *Unternehmen Tannenberg.*

The *Einsatzgruppen* and the commanders of the general police were given, directly from Hitler's headquarters, the order to execute immediately — without a trial — all Poles who put up resistance. In practice the *Einsatzgruppen* killed the so-called suspected persons, including women and children. The action group that operated in Silesia and the Dąbrowa Basin dinstinguished itself by particular brutality and atrocity.

The activity of the *Einsatzgruppen* was acutely felt in the west of Poland, the so-called territories incorporated into the Reich. After these territories had been occupied by the German army the action groups that moved in behind immediately carried out mass arrests among the local population on the basis of secret lists drawn up previously in the Reich or in Gdańsk.

After the invasion of the Soviet Union, the *Einsatzgruppen* committed murders and mass slaughters, unprecedented in history, of the population in the East, sparing neither women, children nor old people.

In the substantiation of its verdict in Case IX of 24 members of the *Einsatzgruppen,* held before the American Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, the tribunal said that "no author of novels on murders, no author of shocking dramas would ever be able to create in his fantasy a plot that would be able to shock human feelings as much as the horrifying drama of these grim gangs".[2]

10. LEBENSBORN e.V.

The *Lebensborn* association was created on December 12, 1935, on the initiative of Himmler in his capacity as *Reichsführer SS.* This institution, which in its statutes had as a motto Himmler's words: "Every mother of good blood will be sacred to us", put into practice the Nazi racialist theories.

Among the statutory tasks of this "association", which admitted only SS officials to membership and which upheld absolute racial purity, was to support "racially valuable" families with many children, to take

care of legitimate and illegitimate "racially valuable" children and to secure statutory tutelage.

In the first period of its existence *Lebensborn* was linked with the SS Race and Settlement Head Office from which it received "ideological guidelines". In 1936 it was incorporated into the personal Staff of the *Reichsführer SS* as the so-called Office "L". Its Main Board was composed of seven departments the most important among which were the health, adoption and legal departments and the department that dealt with the placing of children with substitute families.

The original aim of *Lebensborn* was to reproduce the blood of SS members from whom at least four children were required. In his speech in the "Metz Days" Himmler explained the motives of this principle in the following way:

> We shall survive or we shall perish with this leading blood of Germany, if the good blood is not perpetuated we will be unable to rule over the world. Please, understand that we shall be unable to preserve the Greater Reich which is already taking shape. I am convinced that we are in a position to achieve this but we must prepare for it. If ever we have an insufficient number of sons, those who come after us would be cowards. A nation which has a surplus of four sons in a family, may risk a war; if two sons perish, the two others will carry on the line. The leaders of a nation in which the families have only one or two sons would be loath to take the decision, considering, on the basis of their own experience, that this sacrifice cannot be demanded [3].

The *Lebensborn's* care for families was conditional upon earlier "racial" and health examinations that were to guarantee that future children would have precisely the characteristics of their parents.

Lebensborn was responsible for the abduction and the Germanization of Polish children.

11. DEUTSCHE HEIMSCHULEN

The German Motherland Schools *(Deutsche Heimschulen)* were created on Hitler's instructions early in 1942. They supervised tutelar and educational establishments for boys and girls aged from six to 18 years which were administratively subordinated to the minister of education, and in practice to the *Reichsführer SS*. There were a number of various types of these schools, depending on the child's age and ability. According to the plans of the Nazi authorities, all tutelar-educational establishments in Germany were to be turned into what was called motherland schools.

The basic educational programme of these schools was to impart the national-socialist world outlook to children and youths and to teach them fantastically blind and absolute obedience to the *Führer*, as a part

of the leadership principle. For the aim was to create strong cadres which would help realize the imperialist aims and create a "new order" both in Europe and later in other continents. The guidelines for the school programme were defined as a combination of national-socialist social education with an all-round development of physical, spiritual and intellectual elements. In fact the schools bred and developed hatred for all members of a "lower race".

The task of Germanizing Polish children aged from six to 12 from foster families and from charity houses, was alloted to this institution by a decree from the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom of Ferbruary 19, 1942, No. 67/I. Out of the network of *Heimschulen,* two establishments in particular were designated for Polish children, one for boys from Niederaltreich, Gau Bayreuth in Bavaria, and another for girls at Achern in Baden.

In the Germanization of other nations there was a strict cooperation between the *Deutsche Heimschulen* and the institution of *Lebensborn* which made a record of children put in establishments, made frequent inspections and gave its permission to hand over a child to a German family. The children's Christian names and family names were also changed in the *Heimschulen.*

12. The NATIONALSOZIALISTISCHE VOLKSWOHLFAHRT e.V. (NSV)

The National Socialist Social Welfare institution, which operated as a registered association, was called into being by Hitler's decree of May 1933 and represented an organizational link of the NSDAP, becoming a political instrument of the party. The central office which had its seat in Berlin, was linked with the Head Office for Social Welfare *(Hauptamt für Volkswohlfahrt)* through a personal union of the head of this office and of the Main Office of *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt e. V.* The "NSV Association" had contacts in all party cells — from the lowest to the highest — and administered a broadly developed network of establishments of care for children and mothers. It operated on instructions from and cooperated with the *Reichsführer SS,* the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom, the SS Race and Settlement Head Office and the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle.*

The role of the NSV in the abduction and Germanization of children from alien nations was distinctly criminal in character in view of the type of operations ordered by SS organs, and of its own activities and initiative. The importance of NSV lay principally in an extensively developed administrative, technical and executive apparatus which, when compared to other organizations, provided the conditions for

the largest number of children being covered by the Germanization campaign.

The numbers concerning the scope of this institution's activity with respect to "racially valuable" children born by women deported to forced labour in Germany, are not even approximately known. What is known is that as early as two years before the outbreak of the war, members of the NSV personnel learned Polish and were prepared for the occupation of Polish territories.

Problems connected with the adoption of children were dealt with by the Reich Office for Adoption *(Reichsadoptionsstelle),* an independent agency that operated within the organizational framework of the NSV. It was characteristic of the activity of this institution that it drew up what were called black lists which contained the names of children and families who were deprived of the right to adoption.

The Reich Office for Adoption also had its local agencies in Polish territories, including Katowice. Before giving consent to the adoption of a child it conducted unusually detailed investigations. Their aim was to eliminate and to destroy all manifestations of Polishness in the lands conquered by the Third Reich.

13. THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES

Although the main role in the crimes against the Polish population was performed by the SS organization with its network of diverse institutions and by the police authorities, nevertheless the share of the Third Reich's organs of public administration in these crimes was substantial and was of essential importance in the execution of the plans to exterminate the Polish nation. These organs not only performed the role of co-authors and aides but also came out with their own initiatives.

Cooperation in the crimes committed on children came principally from the administrative organs of the ministries of home affairs, labour and health which operated through the intermediary of their local units: youth offices of various levels, labour offices and health offices.

The role of the state administration is shown for example in a significant way by a decree of the Reich Minister of Interior of December 3, 1942, in which he also credited himself for the initiative to set up a camp for Polish children (*Polen-Jugendverwahrlager*) in Łódź on December 1. He deprived Polish children, in the so-called territories incorporated into the Reich, of any legal protection.

This decree indicates the threat to German youths caused by the overcrowding of educational charity houses. As there were no separate institutions, young people of foreign — particularly Polish — nationality were handed over to German establishments for education.

Thus a political instrument was created with a view to exterminating Polish youth, described as neglected and as failing to satisfy the "racial" criteria. The charge of "neglection" was to provide a semblance of legalism, for in reality the criminal police and the security police tried tendentiously and zealously to substantiate the applications for the deportation of Polish children. Neither was the lower age limit, set at eight years, observed. Thus several year-old children became victims of this policy.

Tens of thousands of Polish children were deported to forced labour and employed in closed places of work or in private enterprises and farms. The methods of enrolment were different. The most effective were round-ups in streets or at schools, organized by German labour offices.

At the Nuremberg trial of Alfred Krupp it was proved that his concern had employed persons aged from 11 to 17, and in 1944 even six-year old children.

The German health service in the Third Reich, influenced by the Nazi doctrine, was marked by complete ethical and moral degradation. Crimes of genocide were perpetrated by prominent doctors, distinguished scientists who were fully aware of their acts. The professional duty to protect life and to fight for it was turned by German doctors into a bloody murderous craft, linked with torture and cruelty. They directed their whole efforts and knowledge to working out methods for the most efficient means of killing.

Even where persons under age could be saved from extermination without any "personal risk", doctors generally did not hesitate to state officially that a child's health condition allowed it to be put in a camp. This took place in the regions incorporated into the Reich where the form for the deportation of a child to a camp required formal medical confirmation in a special column.

The outcome of the trial of representatives of the German health service in the Third Reich before the First American Military Tribunal at Nuremberg on August 19, 1949, shocked the medical world so much that the World Medical Organization modified the content of the medical oath, introducing into it a passage on the equality of races, religion, nationality, and party membership.

14. THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN THE THIRD REICH

At the trial — as it was called — of the "administration of justice", held before the American Military Tribunal in 1947, it was revealed that there had been a complete degradation of law in the Nazi Reich, unprecedented in the history of civilized nations. Among the 14 accused were secretaries of state in the Ministry of Justice (former ministers died before the indictment was made), senior officials of this ministry, presidents and judges of special and people's courts, and prosecutors.

During the several years of Nazi power formal legality gave way to complete lawlessness, and the courts lost their independence and their importance.

In the realization of criminal political aims extensive use was made of the analogy of law wherever the penal code did not provide punishment for a given act, and the rules concerning punishment were disregarded if this was convenient, while the death penalty was applied unrestrictedly if this was required by the "sound people's sense" (*das gesunde Volksempfinden).*

By a Reichstag resolution of April 26, 1942, Adolf Hitler was endowed with full juridical power, without any restrictions from the legal rules in force. On the other hand, by a decree of August 20, 1942, Hitler authorized the minister of justice to depart from the rules of binding law in the management of the administration of justice. The special courts, created on Polish territory shortly after the end of hostilities, were the instrument that was to realize these new principles. These courts, whose activity covered the part of Poland that was incorporated into the Reich, met in Gdańsk, Kwidzyn, Bydgoszcz, Poznań, Inowrocław, Łódź, Włocławek, Kalisz and Katowice. In the General Government, special courts, called into being by a decree of November 15, 1939, operated in the seats of district authorities, and their local departments were situated in Rzeszów, Kielce, Piotrków, Częstochowa, Zamość and from 1941 also in Stanisławów and Tarnopol. They were composed of three professional judges. In the *Warthegau* as many as 555 death sentences were issued in 2,262 indictments considered by the special courts. Among the victims of such an administration of justice were also persons under age.

A significant role was played by the German judiciary in the abduction and Germanization of Polish children.

It can be seen from the minutes of a conference that was held in the Reich Ministry of Justice on March 10, 1943, and which was attended by representatives of the Head Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom, and the SS Race and Settlement Head Office, that the judicial authorities coordinated their

activity with that of the SS authorities in the racial struggle against the Polish nation.

German courts interfered with and decided on matters related to the deprivation of Polish parents or Polish guardians of their right to guardianship over children, to the handing over of guardianship to German offices or persons of German nationality, and in case of divorced mixed marriages entrusted the guardianship over children to the party of German origin.

In justifying their verdicts the courts generally pointed to the circumstance that a child was educated by their parents or guardians in a Polish way, or established — without any grounds — that the father or the mother were insane or neglected their child.

A case in point is provided by a resolution of a German court *(Amstgericht)* in Łódź on July 27, 1941, which deprived Józefina Drzymalska of the right to guardianship over her children, Jan and Herman Drzymalski, and made the Youth Office (*Jugendamt*) their guardian. In the substantiation it was stated that the interference of the Tutelar Court was an urgent necessity because the unworthy mother had educated the children in a Polish spirit.[4]

By a decision of a German court at Katowice of March 13, 1944, the mother of Krystyna Jaworek, born on September 29, 1934, was deprived of the right to guardianship over her daughter, who was sent to an educational establishment. This decision was substantiated as follows:

> The juvenile minor has stayed away from school without any reason since September 6, 1943. Her mother does not send her to school. She is completely irresponsible in this respect. The juvenile minor cannot stay any longer with her and only a severe education may induce her to attend the [German — author's note] school[5].

In the cases when a divorce or the annulment of a marriage were adjudicated, the Polish party was always deprived of the right to guardianship over children. Also earlier verdicts of Polish courts were revised and guardianship over children was granted to the German part. Even in the case of voluntarily concluded legal agreements, German courts deprived the Polish party of the right to guardianship.

Here is a passage from the motivation of a ruling by a German court at Lublin, issued on September 9, 1942, which gave the right to guardianship over a child, Irena Jonszta, born on May 2, 1929, to her German mother:

> The father cannot refer to the agreement concluded before the divorce on the basis of which the child is to stay with him in the eventuality of a divorce. For it ensues from the agreement that the father intended to ensure a Polish edu-

cation for his child... The child's education in its father's home is not sufficiently ensured because he did even not send it to a German school. It must be expected, therefore, that the child will be educated by its father in a Polish spirit, if he did not even permit it to learn German. In these circumstances the court must recognize the agreement concluded between the parents and the renunciation by the mother of her right to guardianship as null and void. What is more, it will be better for the child if it goes to its mother and thus receive a German education. The mother will educate it in a German spirit and preserve it for the German nation...[6].

It must be noted that in the above case the child had been educated by its father and its mother was a completely alien person to it. Such methods led to great tragedies. A father or a mother often left their home with their child and hid from the Nazi authorities.

The servile role of German judiciary with respect to the Nazi doctrines is shown by the substantiation of a verdict pronounced by the district court in Łódź on April 7, 1941. The verdict nullified the marriage contracted by the couple K. The reason was as follows:

The fact that while contracting the marriage the parties knew that the plaintiff was a German and the defendant a Pole, cannot lead to a different decision in this case... It follows from this assumption that the national struggle has ultimately been decided only when the East is incorporated into the Reich. ...This affair only made the plaintiff aware that a nationally mixed marriage cannot be reconciled with the aims of German folkdom in the East[7].

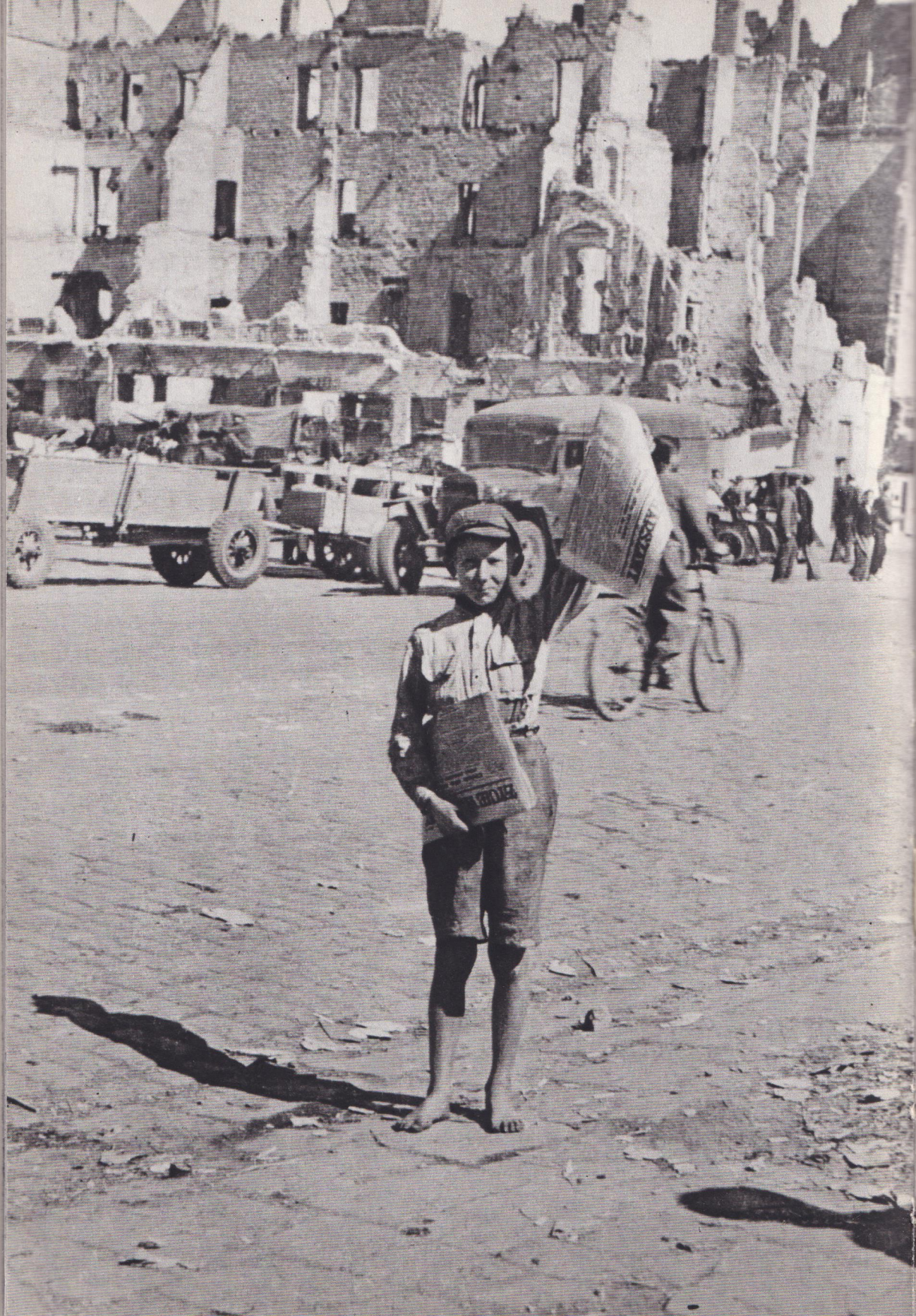
The above examples prove in what a shameful way juridical knowledge and the interpretation of law could be abused, and how the German judiciary — like the state administration — joined the criminal tendency of the totalitarian state.

NOTES

[1] E. Crankshaw, *Gestapo — narzędzie tyranii*, 2nd edition, Warszawa 1960.
[2] "Einsatzgruppen. Wyrok i uzasadnienie", Biuletyn GKBZWwP, 1963, vol. XIV, p. 5.
[3] R. Hrabar. *"Lebensborn" czyli źródło życia*, op. cit., p. 24.
[4] OKBZH in Łódź, sygn. DS 94.
[5] OKBZH in Katowice, sygn. DS 135.
[6] AGK, document 1532/62, XIII.
[7] OKBZH in Łódź, sygn. DS 50.

After Liberation

Life being restored on the ruins



This was how they earned their living in the first period after the liberation

Children in temporary shelters in the Warsaw quarter of Rembertów

Children's playground on the ruins of the city

8

A Balance-sheet of Crime

The crimes committed on the Polish nation and other European nations by the Third Reich, its Nazi forces and officials were unprecedented in the history of mankind. They also represented a violation of the provisions and principles of international law of war.

In Poland Nazi Germany perpetrated crimes against peace, war crimes and crimes against humanity, that is, all the categories of crimes provided for in the Statute and the indictment of the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg.

The Third Reich's act of aggression against Poland on September 1, 1939 and the illegal occupation of Polish territory represented the first stage in the realization of the programme for the Nazi genocidal policy. In accordance with the *Generalplan Ost* and the racialist Nazi ideology the Polish nation was — as "sub-human" (*Untermenschen*) — to be physically exterminated. The theory and practice the national, social, economic and cultural policies of the Third Reich in Poland were subordinated to this aim.

Poland lost a total of 6,028,000 people, the USSR 20,300,000. Thus the total human losses sustained by Poland and the USSR amounted to 26,328,000 persons. The losses sustained by the other anti-Nazi coalition states, including Britain, the United States and France, amounted to 3,682,000 people.[1]

Out of all the states that fought against the Nazi Reich Poland suffered the highest losses: 220 per 1,000 inhabitants while the losses of, for example, Holland amounted to 22, France to 13, Belgium to 12, Great Britain to 8, Norway to 3, the United State to 1.4, Denmark to 0.3.

Out of 30,010,000 casualties suffered in the European countries occupied by the Third Reich and on the front of the struggle against Nazism, 18,100,000 civilians were murdered due to the Nazi policy of extermination, including 5,400,000 in Poland and 10,300,000 in occupied Soviet territories. This means 86.7 per cent of the total number of citizens of 30 European and non-European countries murdered by the Nazis. This was the harvest of the genocidal crimes perpetrated by the Third Reich.

It is impossible precisely to establish all the crimes committed on children and young people, and the losses suffered in this respect.

Time is not the sole obstacle to research in the Nazi crimes committed on Polish citizens under age. There is evidence that most documents were destroyed by the Nazi apparatus with a view to cover up the traces of crime, or were carried out of Poland. Many crimes were not documented at all in the form of reports, memoranda or correspondence. Cases are also known where all traces of crime were obliterated by means of exhumation, the burning of bodies and the subsequent execution of those who did this work. The objective difficulties are increased by the destruction of Polish registers and documentation in towns and villages burnt and razed to the ground. Family members and closest friends who might notify the authorities about the loss of a child were also often killed. It must also be taken into account that crimes against Polish children were also committed outside Polish territory, in the Third Reich, in Austria and Czechoslovakia. Neither is it possible to make use of certain materials and registry documents outside Poland. It must be added yet that in the available documents of the Nazi regime children were generally not numbered separately, and the Nazis confined themselves to stating, for example, the total number of persons executed.

Neither can we leave out the children of Polish miners and foundry workers living in France, who arrived for summer holidays in Poland before the war broke out and remained in the country. During the occupation the German Red Cross was engaged in bringing them back to France but — as available documents indicate — the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom intervened and this arouses suspicion as to whether all of them returned to their families.

It is estimated that a great number of Polish children died in the Reich where they had been deported or were born. In two occupation zones alone, the American and the British, the German administration submitted about 40,000 birth certificates of children of Polish workers deported to the Reich. There are data indicating that in reality the number of Polish children born there was considerably higher. In one maternity clinic for alien workers in Brunswick about 800 alien, including 400 Polish, children were born from May 10, 1943 to the end of the war. On the other hand in the East Hanover district the number of alien children born in 1943 — taking into account women in rural areas only — was estimated at 1,500. The mortality rate in these clinics amounted to about 50 per cent, and in the last period of the war almost every child died.

During evacuations and executions children and babies were shot to death or burnt alive, and the percentage of children in the total number of those murdered oscillated from 10 to 75 per cent.

In the twenty-one *Polenlagern* in the former Upper Silesian Province, the highest mortality was precisely among children. As almost all documents in these camps were destroyed, we run here too into the problem that exists in the investigation of Nazi mass crimes: we cannot establish the exact number of victims, particularly as in many cases they were buried in mass graves.

According to the 1945 census made by the Ministry of Education the number of children at that period amounted to 8,500,000 which amounted to about 30 per cent of the whole population as against 43 per cent in 1931.

As many as 1,356,900 Poles, including about 380,000 boys and about 225,000 girls aged from 14 to 20, were deported from the General Government to slave labour up to June 30, 1944. Thus the four age-groups of those under age, 14 to 18, would account for about 400,000 people deported to the Reich. The War Reparations Office at the Praesidium of the Council of Ministers estimated the total number of those deported at 2,460,000. Due proportions taken into account, the proportion of people aged under 18 would be 29 per cent, that means that the total number of children deported to slave labour would amount to about 710,000. This number does not include children under 14.[2]

Estimation of the number of Polish children taken and doomed to enforced Germanization entails no fewer difficulties. It is possible to establish only certain minimum figures and to compile approximate data as to the scope and the intensity of the crimes mentioned above.

After the end of hostilities the social welfare department of the Municipal Administration in Łódź had the files from the German Youth Office of about 12,000 children from that town. It was established that from this number some 1,200 children had been deported to Germany. These files referred only to the legal guardianship section *(Amtsvormundschaft)*. On the other hand, there were no materials relating to children placed in substitute families and in charity establishments.

In the verdict issued by the Supreme National Tribunal on April 29, 1948, in the case of Albert Forster it was stated:

> To separate Polish children from their families and Germanize them, the national socialists in addition carried Polish children away to the Reich where they gave them to German families or placed them in special establishments. According to an incomplete compilation, enclosed in volume XIV of the dossier, during the occupation some 1,600 children were carried away from the province of Gdańsk-Western Prussia. Many of these children have not returned to Poland so far because their addresses are unknown, so that they are mostly irretrievably lost to Polish society[3].

Ulrich Greifelt's decree No. 67/I instructed to Germanize Polish children who stayed in charity establishments and with foster families in Poznań and Łódź voivodships. These children were in fact carried

away to Germany. The number of children in establishments in this area alone amounted — according to statistical data compiled by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare — to 5,226 before the outbreak of the war. It was stated that the percentage of children recognized as "racially valuable" was high.

It ensues from a report by the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom dated December 22, 1942, contained in the records of the eighth Nuremberg trial, that on November 30, 1942, there were in the Reich 1,127 girls in households in towns, 5,691 in rural households, a total of 6,818 "Germanizable" girls, employed as housemaids.

A list of transports in the records of the RGO in Warsaw indicates that 4,454 children were deported from the Zamość region to Germany in 1943.

The records of the *Kreisleitung der NSDAP, Amt für Volkswohlfahrt* in Katowice, recovered in Silesia, refer to about 3,000 children who stayed in Polish families or were taken away from their parents for purposes of Germanization.

The group of *Lebensborn* officials, accused in Case VIII in Nuremberg, explained that this institution had had under its care about 92,000 children, including about 12,000 born in the *Lebensborn*'s own establishments.

In view of fact that *Lebensborn* took care — in addition to German children — of Polish, Yugoslav, Czech children, and children of other nationalities, it seems justified to suppose that among the 80,000 children who were not born in *Lebensborn* establishments, was a substantial number of children deported from occupied countries, and particularly from Poland where this institution began to take children very early and did it most systematically.

It arises from materials of the International Tracing Service at Arolsen (Federal Republic of Germany) that Polish children accounted for 70—80 per cent of all children traced and found in Germany and Austria.

In addition it must be taken into account that France — where no planned pillage was effected by the Germans — estimated its losses in children carried away to Germany or born in Germany by French women at some 100,000.

Czechoslovakia which had the possibility of establishing its losses with precision, in view of the absence of war-ravages there, managed until the middle of 1948 to recover barely 25 per cent of those children whose deportation to Germany could be proved indisputably.

Certain comparative data come also from Ulrich Greifelt's letter of May 13, 1942, to Heinrich Himmler. In it he informed the *Reichsführer SS* that in the preparations (for Germanization in Estonia and Latvia) care had already been taken of 1,167 Estonian and 3,950 Latvian child-

ren. It is thus assumed that some 200,000 Polish children were seized for purposes of Germanization.

It is estimated that as a result of Nazi terror and the hostilities 1,800,000 children under 16 died between 1939 and 1945, including some 600,000 children of Jewish descent.[4] To this number we should add further age-groups, those aged 16 to 18 who were the most exposed to extermination during the occupation. This would represent about 225,000 people under age. This number is increased by the 200,000 children carried away from Poland or seized in the Third Reich for purposes of Germanization. Just under 20 per cent of them returned home. This number of recovered children is certainly not higher than the number of those who were born and died in Germany. These two numbers are thus approximately identical.

It must also be noted that — though many years have gone by since the end of hostilities — new previously unknown facts of Nazi crimes are being detected and more victims, both adults and children, are being revealed.

Poland's total losses may thus be estimated at 2,225,000 at least. This represented about 35 per cent of the total losses of the Polish population. This is a realistic figure which corresponds to the direction and the intensity of the genocidal crimes of Nazism on Polish territory. These losses do not include the decline in the natural increase of the population.

The losses caused by physical emaciation and psychic disorders among children during the occupation simply cannot be represented in terms of numbers. This applies principally to people under age imprisoned in the various camps, prisons and establishments as well as those expelled, deported, starved and systematically deprived of appropriate dwelling conditions. A total of 2,478,000 Poles were expelled from their homes in Poland, including some 110,000 people in the Zamość region, of whom about 30 per cent were children. In the remaining number of Poles, expelled from what were called land incorporated into the Reich, the percentage of children was also high. In addition — as UNESCO stated — as many as 13,000,000 abandoned children, including 1,000,000 orphans in Poland, were in Europe as a consequence of the Second World War.

Even those who have only a superficial knowledge of history may draw the conclusion that Nazi genocide essentially differs from the genocide committed in previous historical periods which was principally characterized either by strategic reasons or by the occasional nature of an action or finally by the uncivilized level or emotional state of the agents.

The genocide committed in the period of the Third Reich, described as a "martial law state", was characterized among others by:

— the creation of certain "ideological dogmas" such as the inequality of races, the ruthless law of nature which doomed races and nations to extermination and slavery;
— a programming of crimes, both short and long-term, sometimes down to the minutes details;
— the use of law as an instrument of crime with a view to giving a semblance of legality to actions and a more precise direction to these crimes;
— the deliberate bringing about of a state of collective psychopathy;
— the harnessing of advances in science and technology into the mechanism of crime and the focusing of scientific research and experiments exclusively onto the achievement of the most effective genocidal measures;
— the highest degree of danger among a population, expressed in the concept of total war;
— the maximum degree of intellectualization of offences which manifested itself also in a series of crimes of which some were the condition for the development of others, such as the idea of financing the institution of *Lebensborn* — which brought up seized children and obliterated the traces of their origin — with money deducted from part of the remuneration for slave work, that is partly by the work of the families of seized children;
— children as the exclusive object and motivation for crimes;
— the agents of crimes acted directly and intentionally and as instigators and aides.

The above characteristics and elements justify the assertion that the Nazi crimes of genocide were characterized not only by quantitative changes but principally by qualitative changes. And with respect to children they should be recognized as qualified crimes of genocide with additional, specific characteristics.

In international jurisdiction and in individual opinions it has been stated that the Thrid Reich's genocidal acts went far beyond the experience of normal people. The mass murder of people, contrary to the concepts of morality, assumed unprecedented proportions.

An unequivocal view was expressed by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg which stated that the Nazi crimes had been perpetrated in dimensions unknown in the history of war.

This standpoint was expressed at a time when a number of various forms of crimes were not yet known and disclosed, the crimes committed on children for example, in all their forms.

The crimes against children are the blackest page in the annals of humanity.

NOTES

[1] *Sprawozdanie w przedmiocie strat i szkód wojennych Polski w latach 1939-1945*, Warszawa 1947.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] AGK, verdicts by the Supreme National Tribunal, sygn. 76.

[4] H. Aunderska, "Poland — The Children Cannot Wait". New Education Fellowship, London 1946.

List of Main Abbreviations

AGK — Archives of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland.

DVL — *Deutsche Volksliste* — German National List.

Gestapo — *Geheime Staatspolizei* — Secret State Police.

GKBZHwP — Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland.

Kripo — *Kriminalpolizei* — German Criminal Police.

NO — Nazi Organization — an abbreviation referring to documents submitted in 12 Nuremberg trials before American Occupation tribunals on problems related to Nazi organizations.

NSDAP — *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* — National Socialist German Workers' Party

NSV — *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* — National Socialist Social Welfare

RF SS — *Reichsführer SS* — Himmler's personal title as head of the SS

RK FDV — *Reichskommissar für die festigung des Deutschen Volkstums* — Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom.

RSHA — *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* — Reich Main Security Office.

RuSHA — *Rasse u. Siedlungshauptamt* — Race and Settlement Head Office.

SD — *Sicherheitsdienst* — SS Security Service.

Sipo — *Sicherheitspolizei* — Security Police.

SS — *Schutzstaffeln* — Elite Guards.

VoMi — *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* — German National Mediation Office.

WVHA — *Wirtschafts und Verwaltungshauptamt SS* — SS Economic and Administrative Head Office.

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Translated by
Bogdan Buczkowski (Introduction and Chapters 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8) and Lech Petrowicz (Chapters 2, 3 and 4).

Graphic layout
WALDEMAR ŻACZEK

Production editor
ELŻBIETA SZESZKO

This is the one thousand nine hundred and fiftieth publication from Interpress

This book appears also in Polish, French, German and Russian

Illustrations by courtesy of the archives of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland, Archives of the State Museum in Oświęcim, J. Bryan, R. Dutkiewicz, E. Falkowski and S. Rassalski

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Printed in Poland

ISBN-83-223-1950-9

Prasowe Zakłady Graficzne, Bydgoszcz

Cena 175,– zł

ISBN-83-223-1950-9